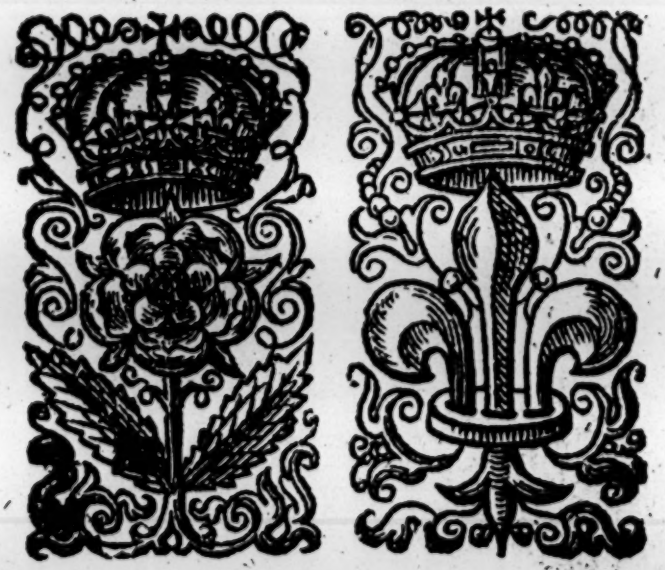
LETTERS
BETWEEN
The Ld *GEORGE DIGBY*,
AND
Sr *KENELM DIGBY* k^t.
CONCERNING
Religion.



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a. 28

To the Reader.

'Tis no EXCUSE *(though too often it is made one) to tell Thee these* LETTERS *are now made publick to prevent false Copies: for really, if you have not these, you will be abus'd with others, so im-*

perfect and mangled, that we may justly pronounce them to be none of the Authors own. In Matters of Religion *there ought to be greatest care to publish nothing but what is genuine, which here (without more words) thou wilt soon find is faithfully offered thee.*

Farewell.

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My nobleſt Couſin and deareſt friend.

Ever thought my ſelf a Rich man in the many teſtimonies of your favour, being perſwaded that the authority of your eſteeming me, may work more upon the World to my advantage, then many perſonal defects of mine own to my prejudice. Among my beſt titles to valuation with Worthy men, I treaſure up your laſt Letter, expecting to receive thereby as much Credit hereafter, as I doe now obligation; when thoſe that finde it, (knowing your eminence and only my name) ſhall happily

pily misconceive my praises there to have been of your judgement, which I must refer meerly to your love and civility. Persist, I beseech you in the former of these, and restrain your selfe in the excesse of the latter, permitting and owning me to be your friend, without making me mine own flatterer; of which I can never come in danger, but by your commendations. I think my selfe as happy to beare the name of your friend, and promise to my selfe as much eternity by the relation, as he who ingraved Sir *Philip Sydnie's* friendship on his Monument.

But I must tell you, I aspire yet to a farre greater felicity, that is, to be made worthy of so brave an appellation, to which you can best contribute, if you please to impart freely to me your own rare abilities, and my weaknesses, rather then to darken these unto me, in exercising but the slightest part that you excell in, Courtlinesse. To take you off from this, and to engage you in the other, give me leave to lay hold on that part of your letter which concerns my studies. Wherein as your example and advice have ever been my prime directory in the way of them; so in the severall judgements of what I read, yours must be ever with me of singular authority.

Yet in the particular concerning the Fathers, I must confesse, as I came unto them, perhaps with

with different preparations, ſo I have likewiſe peruſed many of them with reflections upon their uſefulneſs, farre differing from thoſe you ſpecifie. I am ſo farre from receiving them as Judges, that in many caſes I cannot admit them as Witneſſes authentick enough, whereon to paſſe a verdict in religion. I diſcover me thinkes too prone a Bias in moſt of their evidence, either to the eſtabliſhing of their own private opinions, or to the deſtruction of their adverſaries: and this even in the moſt Primitive of them; faction it ſeems, and a kind of Sectary paſſion, having had as ſtrong, though not ſo various a current, even neer to the very Springs of Verity, as afterward in the remoter Channels, as you can much better inſtance (if you pleaſe) then I, out of *Euſebius*, *Epiphanius*, and St. *Auguſtine*; who themſelves alſo, as they ſeem to adhere to the Catholick Church, and as the *Roman* glories in them, may well be by both ſides allowed an Expurgator.

For that which you ſay, Secondly, that you rely more upon the Fathers, for what they tell us they were taught, then upon what they teach, I profeſſe I ſhould do ſo too, could I be but halfe ſo wel aſſured of the firſt part of your reaſon; namely, that the former was derived from an infallible authority, as I am of the other, that their own reaſons were liable to Error. But to tell you true, as I can yet finde

no reaſon to make me acknowledge that there is any infallible Authority, but only the Scriptures (which I conceive is not that you mean;) ſo do I finde as little that the Fathers (eſpecially thoſe before the firſt *Nicene* Councel) were perſwaded of any ſuch. And grant they were, I can leaſt of all diſcern which of the various doctrins they deliver, were rightly delivered to them from that unerring authority; Since it is apparent, methinks, that they do teach many uncertainties and errors, as *Dogmatically*, and with as ſolemn confirmations, as they do the moſt authentique truths. Hardly ſhal you find Scripture alledged more frankly by them, or the Church tradition proclaimed more lowdly in any point of Faith, then by *Juſtin* and *Tertullian*, in the rigid cenſure of the uſe of Images, and in the ſame *Tertullian* in affirming Chriſts deſcent to free the Patriarks; and in theſe two, and diverſe others, the groſs aſſertion of the Angels copulation with women: and laſtly, then in all the *Millenaries* moſt confident authorizing of their *Judaic* doctrine. Theſe are perhaps of the ſlighter inſtances, ſuch as flow eaſieſt into a Letter from a bad memory; and yet I pray you reſolve me which of them I ſhall let paſs, as derived from infallibilitie? whether that which our Church approves, and the *Roman* condemns, as the firſt; or that which the *Roman* agrees to, and we diſallow,

disallow, as the second; or the second last, which both sides reject? I profess I am as yet to distinguish which of them these Fathers meant we should swallow as delivered to them, and which chew and consider as onely delivered by them. These and many more irreconcileable passages in them, have rendred me much alike affected both to what you say they tell us they were taught, and to what they teach; that is, to have my reason, as much as I can cleared and enlightned by both, but to suffer it to be hoodwinkt and led implicitly by neither. I reverence those holy Fathers, as divine establishers of Faith in things where they all concur, and where not, as happy aides of the understanding, and as it were sacred bellowes of the soul, whether to make it glow unto contrition, and fervor of zeal, or to subtilize and exalt it into flames of contemplation.

It is now high time for me to beg your pardon, for having licensed my self so much to your trouble. It is an inconvenience drawn upon you by your excess of favour and obligingness, that have incouraged me freely to express to your self my ill-digested opinions; wherein toward any other I should have been restrained by shame and the consciousness of mine own incapacities; but from you I ever promise my self rectifying, where

from another I might look for contempt: All your juſt cenſures, I am ſure will be ſweetned inſtantly by this one conſideration, that this pennance hath been laid upon you by

SHERBURN, Novemb. 2. 1638.

Nobleſt Couſin,

Your faithfull Servant

G. D.

My Nobleſt Lord, and moſt honoured Friend;

MY unſteady abode in the town, and frequent ſuddain excurſions out of it of late, have caſt me ſo far behinde-hand with your Lordſhip, not onely for what civility requireth of me, but for what duty bindeth me unto, as I was grown to a belief that I could make no other amends for my long ſilence, but by coming on purpoſe to *Sherburn* to you to excuſe it. And therefore out of an ill baſhfulneſs I forbore acknowledging my fault by Letter, deferring that till I was in ſtate to repair it by mine own perſonal attendance. But that being not likely to fall out ſo ſoon, I being to

go

go to morrow to my Mothers, and thence to my own houſe for ſome weeks; and I having lately received a picture from my Lord *Ruſſel*, with command to ſend it as ſoon as I could to your Lordſhip, I durſt not make that a priſoner till I got liberty my ſelf to wait upon you. By which means I am engaged, without being able to defer it any longer, to give you humble thanks for your Letter of the ſecond of *November*, and to crave your pardon that I came thus late to do it. So ſudden and diſtracted an hour as I have now to write in, would deterre me from offering at any return to ſo obliging and judicious a Letter, till I had a greater freedom both of time and thoughts. But J can never be taken unprovided for the firſt part, my ſincere affection to your Lordſhip, and ſence of your favours ever outweighing any other humane object that may buſie my mind: and for the ſecond, of anſwering your judicious objections, I ſhall confide more for the ſolution of them in your own calm and impartial reflections upon them, then in ought I ſhall be able to reply. Therefore had I never ſo much time, I would for this intent imply it onely in reducing the matters into your remembrance, and intreating you to commit the appearances on both ſides fairly oue againſt another into the ballances, and let your own Reaſon hold the Scale, which

which I must acknowledge with exceſſe of joy, to bee the ſtrongeſt and moſt ſincere that I know in any man. I ſhould begin the performance of this task with complaining to your Lordſhip in the Fathers behalfe, and repreſenting their grievances to your Lordſhip, that you are ſo rigorous to them, as to exclude them from being Witneſſes in matters of Religion. Their humility, as well of underſtanding, as of manners, will not let them be troubled when they are recuſed as Judges: They never pronounce any thing out of their own breaſts, unto which they will confine other mens aſſents. But when they tell you plainly what they were taught, and what they finde believed and practiſed generally throughout the whole Church, have they not reaſon to take it unkindly to be rejected? If you will examine their veracity by al thoſe circumſtances that are uſually conſidered in taking mens depoſitions, you will finde them ſtrong on their ſide. They were right honeſt men, not onely believed, but known to be ſuch by all the world. They are acknowledged on all hands to be ſo judicious, as would more blemiſh ones own judgement then theirs, but to cal it in queſtion. What they wrote of, are matters belonging to their own Art and Trade, in which ſurely they would have great care and attention not to

miſtake

miſtake, ſince their own and their poſterities eternall ſalvation depended on it: Since then there is will and ability to inform us of truth, why ſhould we ſuſpect them? What can appeare ſtronger to us in oppoſition of what they deliver as Witneſſes, to make us doubt their evidence? and conſequently to brand them with the imputation of falſhood and ignorance, flattering our ſelves that new and clearer lights ſhine to us, and that we know more then they? Their private opinions (for the eſtabliſhing of which your Lordſhip ſaith, you diſcover too prone a Bias in moſt of their evidence) doe not intereſt our beliefs; in ſuch points we are as free as they. Nor can I believe ſo ill of any of them, as to make thoſe to paſſe for currant, they would ſtamp upon them the ſeale of being taught from hand to hand, and of Tradition from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and of the generall and uncontrouled beliefe and practice of the Church; or if they did, certainly their numerous adverſaries would not have let ſuch foul play ſcape their note. It is true, they were ever, as your Lordſhip obſerves, earneſt and ſevere againſt them who were ſuch, as if they had been milde againſt their Hereſies, they would never have gained the name of Fathers and Pillars of the Church, nor have been reverenced as Saints by ſucceeding ages. The

faction and ſectary-paſſion that your Lordſhip remarketh even neer the ſprings of verity, belongeth onely to their adverſaries; their warmth is juſt and due zeale: And for thoſe three Fathers of whom your Lordſhip ſayes, that we as well as you may allow them an Expurgator; I profeſs my ſlender reading never met, to my beſt remembrance, with any doctrine of faith in them, that I doe not intirely aſſent unto. In the next place, my Lord, I muſt clear what I mean by the infallible Authority from whence the Fathers derived what they were taught, which I diſtinguiſhed againſt what of themſelvs they teach. Of this later ſort are the reflections that they make upon the Scriptures, when in their Comments or Sermons they deliver to us what occurred to them in the interpretation of the Texts of it. And when they are but barely ſuch, I conceive they are to have no more weight with thoſe that have ability to examine them, then the reaſons wherewith they are accompanied do give them. But the other points of Doctrine I take to have been taught by Chriſt to his Apoſtles, and by them preached through the world, and then again delivered to the enſuing age by them that had theſe points inculcated into their hearts by the Apoſtles, and in this manner with care (and everywhere) handed over from age to age; which upon parti-

particular occaſions the Fathers uſed to ſum up and produce againſt Innovators that would make breaches upon the ancient and generally received Faith of the Church. Doctrines thus delivered, I conceive, to be derived from infallible Authority as well as the Scriptures, and *withall, that it is ſo ſafely conveyed to us, as we are as deeply obliged to beleeve it, as what the Scriptures teach us*, and in governing the tenor of our Faith, to give them much the precedency: Becauſe by ſuch Tradition, we are fully, plainly, and practically taught how to underſtand it, and the buſineſs and errand of it is, to deliver it ſo unto us; whereas the cauſes of writing the particular Books of Scripture, were for other particular ends, and not to give us a compleat body of Faith. And thoſe Articles of it that they do deliver us, are not ſo plainly expreſſed, that every body can underſtand them. So that if it be once admitted, that by ſuch tradition there can be had in all ages a compleat and true knowledge of what Chriſt taught, it cannot be denied, but that it is an eaſier and better rule to guide our underſtanding in the affaires of Religion, then to reſort for that end to the Scripture alone. And that ſuch Tradition is infallible, I have endeavoured to prove in another diſcourſe which your Lordſhip hath, ſo that I will not trouble you here with any repetitions upon that Subject.

Now

Now when I wrote to your Lordship my opinion of the use to be made of reading the Fathers, relying upon them more for what they were taught, then for what they teach; it was as taking them for faithfull Collectors of the traditions that they found general through the Church in their times, and sincere conveyers of them to us: And this course you shall finde even among the ancientest of them. When St: *Austin* will establish the doctrine of praying for the dead, he telleth that it hath been the practice of the whole Church from the Apostles time. The like he doth against the Pelagians, and upon severall other occasions; and directeth us to enquire what faith is professed in the Churches established by the Apostles; from whom he reckoneth on the uninterrupted succession of Pastors unto his time: And by them hee deriveth the present Doctrine from the first preachers, who had it immediately from Christ. *Tertullian*, when he prescribeth against Heresie, giveth you a Catalogue of the Bishops of severall Churches, from the severall Apostles that planted them; and with the successions of the persons, urgeth the succession in those Churches of the Doctrine he seeketh to establish. *Irenaus* doth the like, and generally all of them; which they doe not only when they use those formal positive words that the whole Church hath

received from the Apoſtles, and holdeth generally ſuch and ſuch a Doctrine: but at other times alſo when they doe but intimate it in their Diſcourſes, which intimation is ſuch as is eaſily perceptible to whoſoever of judgement ſhall read them impartially. Therefore to ſummon up as ſhort and as plainly as I can, the uſe, as I conceive is to be made of reading the Fathers; I ſay that letting paſſe what they writ as Commentors upon the Scriptures, and as Philoſophers, and all which is but as Divines and Scholars, we are generally to take hold of what they deliver us as Paſtors of the Church, which appeareth chiefly by what they writ againſt thoſe they brand with Hereſie, which they could not doe, were not thoſe poynts which they cenſure, againſt the known and generall Tradition of the Church: And next, when they deliver us dogmatically and profeſſedly any Doctrine in ſuch ſort as we may reaſonably conceive they intended we ſhould take it as matter of faith, not giving it as conceptions of their own, which they bring onely learned arguments on texts of Scripture to maintain: in all which a free & good judgement will eaſily diſcern by reading them, which way to incline; which I knowing your Lordſhip to be, doe beſeech you to apply it a little induſtriouſly, to collect throughout their ſenſe, and by what they ſay to frame a model

of the Government, Beliefe, and practiſe of the Church wherein they lived, and then tell me whether it be like yours or ours: It is worth the while; Criticks labour to get ſome knowledge of the manners and cuſtomes of Ages long ſince paſt by little fragments of antiquity that have hardly ſcaped into their hands; And Lawyers get a knowledge of the Government and frame of the State in Kings reignes long agoe, by broken and disjoynted Records, that they meet with ſcattered in ſeverall Files. And theſe maimed evidences by chance fallen into their hands, doe ſerve to beget a fairer body of kuowledge, when they know how to make a right uſe of them, and ſuch as will convince an indifferent and equall hearer: much more certainly the Fathers works that handle profeſſedly and at large the affairs of the Church and Religion, and whereof we have ſuch plenty, will fairly inform a rational and diſcourſing man of the true ſtate of them in their times, and what they conceived and had been taught, imported Heaven or Hell in mans beliefe and practiſe; which I am ſure your Lordſhip will allow to carry a great ſtroke in ours, and from which it is madneſs, if not impiety, to depart upon leſſe grounds then a demonſtration to convince the contrary. Though I have already too much tre ſpaſſed upon your Lordſhips patience by my tedious

Letter,

Letter, yet I may not conclude it, till I have ſaid a word or two to the foure inſtances your Lordſhip giveth toward the latter end of yours. Firſt, for the uſe of Images, I doe not conceive it to be a precept given by Chriſt, but ſince introduced by the Governors of the Church, as a thing convenient to raiſe devotion in the people.

Now things of that nature may be convenient at one time, and unfit at another. When Idolatry was freſh in the memory and practiſe of the world, it was dangerous to admit it; therefore in the primitive times. *Juſtin* and *Tertullian* might have reaſon to cry it down. But becauſe there was no precept of Chriſt in that behalfe conſerved in the Church, you ſee they urge not the authority of Tradition of the Church to beat down their uſe, but arguments of their own, and Texts of Scripture produced by them; whereas now in times ſecured from that danger, and a great good appearing in them (they being as a Father ſaid, the bookes of unlettered perſons, to beget knowledge and ſtirre up devotion in them) as ſtrong Arguments, and as pregnant Texts of Scripture are produced for their uſe, and to juſtifie the Governours of the Church in recommending them to the people. Your ſecond inſtance is of *Tertullians* affirming Chriſts deſcent to free the Patriarks; which I conceive

not onely he, but all the Fathers that ever ſpake of that particular, deliver it as a matter of Faith, and ſo it hath been ever held by the Church: which word of *Deſcent* I take it is to be underſtood, as we we all doe, the Article of the Creed, *He deſcended into Hell*, that is, by his power and operation at leaſt, by which he confounded the damned, comforted the Soules in Purgatory, and brought to the ſight of God, thoſe in *Abrahams* boſome, that is, a place of reſt, where yet they enjoyed not the beatificall viſion. For to give other motion and place to a ſoule, is a queſtion in Philoſophy, and concernes not Faith; and ſuch was the Aſſertion of the Angels copulation with women; for many, or rather moſt of the Fathers were of opinion, that they were not pure Spirits, but had very ſubtile & immortall bodies (the contrary of which was never yet delivered as matter of faith, howbeit by force of Argument now the corporiety of Angels is exploded out of the Schools) and thus ſuppoſing that opinion, the way is obvious enough in commenting ſome Texts of Scripture, to fall into that error, which ſo becommeth an error in Philoſophy, and in no wiſe concerning Faith. And that other of the Millenaries, which is the laſt your Lordſhip urgeth, appeareth plainly to have grown among ſome of the Fathers, (with whom the autho-

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rity of *Papias* weighed much) by literally interpreting a Text of the *Apocalyps*; but never any of them urged the generally received opinion of the Church, nor publick Tradition from Christ and the Apostles. And besides, the Church has never yet to this day, condemned as an heresie, that part of the Millenaries beliefe, which some of the Fathers held (which is, of the Saints reigning with Christ a thousand yeares upon earth after their resurrection, and enjoying onely spirituall delights) but only other foule enormities which went under the name of the Millenaries heresies. Now by what I have said to those instances in particular, and bringing that spirit that I said before was required to the reading of the Fathers, I conceive it will be no hard matter to determine which of them, as your Lordship sayes, we are to swallow as delivered to them, and which to chaw and consider as onely delivered by them. One thing more I shall adde in generall, which is, That a large and great soule, like yours, expresseth it selfe more to its advantage in weighing in the powerfull scale of Reason, that it hath the main bulk of what it is to judge of, rather then to dwell with too scrupulous a diligence upon little quillets and niceties, which admit arguments on both sides, and in the mean time let slide away unnoted, that great deale which is uncontroulable and

plaine, as though one were but to declame in Schoole, to exercise ones wit, and therefore he maketh choyce of some nigenious Paradox against a known and received truth; and to impugne it, can bring but against it the skirts of arguments, or rather cavils of wit, without being able to grapple with the main body of it, and seekes rather to puzzle and embroyl his adversary, then weightily to establish the solid truth. This is a subject that is deeply to be considered for use, (the importantest that we can have, not argued upon for ostentation) and that a wise man ought to seek a settlement in, and not aim at the applause of being sharpsighted, by reducing all things to uncertainty. Therefore, good my Lord, apply that great understanding you are so excellenty endowed withall, to build as well as to pull down, and read not the Fathers with a fore-laid designe to enerve their authority; but with an indifferency to yeeld your assent to what upon the whole matter you shall judge reasonable for you so to doe. And since I know that your judgement must in all things that are controverted before it, of this nature, tend to settlement one way or other, (for only sciolous wits float onely in uncertainty, as delighting to make objections, and raise a dust which afterward their weak eyes cannot look through) let me recommend to you not onely to exa

mine

mine whether the opinion you meet with in your reading, repugnant to what you were formerly imbued with, be concludingly demonſtrated or no, but likewiſe examine as ſtrictly the reaſon you have for your own; and where the ſcale weighes heavieſt, give your aſſent. For ſince of contradictory propoſitions one muſt neceſſarily be true, and the other falſe, a man proceedeth upon ſafe grounds, if he take for a firme truth what is oppoſite to an aſſertion that betrayes its owne weakneſſe; whereas if you look onely upon the truth, you may happily at the inſtant not finde a full reſolution to every objection that may be raiſed againſt it; which proceedeth not from the weakneſſe of the thing, but from ours, that cannot at the firſt ſight look into the bottome of it.

You ſee, my Lord, how confident I am with you, to tell you what upon the preſent in ſuch ſhortneſs and diſtraction of time occurreth to me upon this ſubject, which your goodneſſe hath invited me unto, and I begge the continuance of it, firſt in pardoning me; and next, in imparting to me your reflections upon them, which I profeſſe ſincerely, I value beyond any mans, and moſt of all, in loveing me as you have ever done, which is the happieſt condition that can give a bleſſing unto

London Decem. 29 1638.

My Lord, your Lordſhips moſt humble and moſt faithfull ſervant, K.D.

My deare Lord,

WHen I wrot my Letter, I intended to review and copy it; but it held me much longer time then I deſigned to it. It ſhould not have been with my dull head and hand, an after-ſuppers work, and after comming home from vain entertainment with ſome impertinent ſhe-wits that moſt tyrannicallyhad ſeized upon me: They had tune'd my brains to ſo croſs a Key, as afterward all ſerious Images came ſo lamely into my fancy, as I may be aſhamed to ſend you this rough draught of them, and ſo ſlowly halting, as I was in good faith three houres about thoſe blotted and interlined ſheets. For it was an houre paſt midnight afore I had done, which was not one to enter upon ſo tedious a task, as to lick this abortive and miſhapen Embrion into form. And now this morning my company calls upon me to be gone, ſo that I am in a ſtrait to appeare before your Lordſhip, either extreamly negligent if I deferre till my return to towne, the anſwering of your Letter, and the ſending my Lord *Ruſſels* Picture; or extreamly indiſcreet, if I ſend you ſo rude and indigeſted reflections upon your ſo judicious and ſtrong

diſcourſe,

diſcourſe, wherein the inſtances, though your Lordſhip be pleaſed to call them ſlight ones, and ſuch as flow eaſieſt into a Letter from a bad memorie, yet you muſt give me leave to believe them the ſtrongeſt and ſharpeſt that can be urged upon this ſubject, and the flower and Quinteſſence of what Mr. *Chillingworth* and the beſt wits have produced againſt the tradition of the Church, and the authority of the Fathers. But I will chooſe rather to fall into your hands for the latter, then under your cenſure for the firſt; and ſo asking you a thouſand pardons, I ſend you this, by which, all I can hope, is, that you will at leaſt diſcern in me a great willingneſs to come out of your debt in this kinde (for all other I know impoſſible) though I am but a ſlow and imperfect paymaſter: and that you will in ſome meaſure, gueſs at what I would ſay if I had time to digeſt and range it as it ſhould be. I ſhall here only by way of ſupplement, adde this more concerning the *Millenaries* (becauſe I would not render my Letter more illegible by new interlining it) that as I remember *Juſtin Martyr* himſelf, ſaith it is an opinion not generally beleeved in the Church, but that many of the Orthodox reject it; howbeit he profeſſed to hold it for true, and accordingly endeavoureth to prove it by authority of Scripture; all which manifeſtly

manifeſtly declareth, that it was no avowed tradition of the Church from Chriſt; it is true, *Papias* ſeemeth to imitate as though it were in ſome obſcure manner derived from Chriſt, but not as a thing commanded to be preached and taught. He telleth it as a myſterie or ſecret, whiſpered by him to ſome of the Apoſtles, whom he would oblige more then their fellowes, by imparting ſome thing to them for their knowledge, that the reſt ſhould be ignorant of. But no ſuch by-rivulet (though it ſhould come from the true fountain) can ever fall into the main and avowed Channell of Eccleſiaſtical tradition; Indeed it is likely that *Cerinthus* the Heretick to juſtifie his new device in that particular, fathered it on Saint *John* as whiſpered to him by Chriſt in conference; and from him *Papias* that was an eaſie and ſimple man, taking it, paſſed by his name, and vouchſafed only the Apoſtles, which ſome believed as a private truth, and others denied, as is apparent.

December 26. 163⅘.

Your Lordſhips moſt humble and faithfull Servant

K. D.

My

My Nobleſt Couſin, and beſt friend,

I Beg your pardon, for making you ſo ſlow a return of my humble thanks for your excellent Letter of the 26 of *December*; and I ſhould have needed your pardon much more, if your favours in it had been leſſer. The exceſſe of them in ſuch variety of obligations, juſtifies me in the leaſure I take to taſte and enjoy each endearing circumſtance apart; weighing and comparing with one another the ſeverall delights I ough you, whilſt everywhere I finde my ſelf either courted by him I love moſt, or applauded by himI emulate moſt, or inſtructed by the perſon whoſe abilities I admire moſt; and all this by you dear Couſin, the prime object of my nobleſt affections. My heart is ſo much affected with theſe favours, that were this Letter (or rather Volumne, whoſe bulk may well affright you with the trouble it threatens) filled with nothing but acknowledgements, it would fall as ſhort of ſatisfaction to my ſelf in the thankfull part, as I fear it will of giving it you in the reſt that it treats of. But as in the firſt it is impoſſible for me to utter the hundredth part of my thoughts, ſo in the other could I expreſs all and more then ever I can think of, I ſhould yet deſpair of efficacy to convince you by any thing

thing that can flow from a Pen animated with such dull reflections as mine, which here notwithstanding I venture to set down chiefly in obedience to your commands in the close of your Letter, and partly through fear that I might else in some kinde incurr the tax, either of Hypocrisy if I should by silence confess an assent in Matters of Religion where I am not convinced: or of perverseness, should I dissent without shewing cause for it; which I shall here endeavour to manifest, but still with this protestation, that could I admit of such a doctrin, that in the affairs of our faith I ought to be swayed by any humane authority, either of one or many, I should at this instant publish a valediction to my opinions, what great wits soever may sustain them, as willingly as I do here grant you the prehemineence above the highest that I have known.

And here in the first place I do most heartily wish I could concur with you in all the rest, as I do in the Introduction of your discourse, that so I might be united to you in opinion, as I am most intirely in affection. I joyne with you in full admiration of the Piety, Learning, and Integrity of those reverend Fathers of the Church, whose Lives, whose Zeales, whose Deaths abundantly merited that title with everlasting celeberations of their memories; their veracity I attribute

infinitely

infinitely unto, from a due consideration of all those happy circumstances wherewith your eloquence authorizes it. You cannot aggravate their impieties enough, who would offer to exclude such Sages from being witnesses in the most important matters of Religion: If any former slip of my pen can be but wrested to such an injustice, let me purge my self by a solemn Recantation. But I hope my words imported not any such sense, I am sure my sense intended not any such words; those of my Letter were as I remember, that I could not admit them for witnesses Authentick enough, whereon to pass a Verdict in many cases of Religion: Wherein by two restrictions, I am safely protected from any just imputation of so unjust a negative, since the one by the very exception of many cases, attributes to their testimony a validity in many, the other allows it an inducing power in the very denying it a convincing one, and tends no way to an exclusion, but only to a qualification of their evidence. Many indeed are the cases wherein I hold their Test monials most sacred and unquestionable; such are the grand Fundamentals of Christianity, the doctrine of believing in one God, of the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection, and some other the constitutive Articles of Christian Faith. These (to use your own terms) were matters

ters indeed that concern'd their Art and Trade, matters indeed whereon their own and their posterities Salvation undoubtedly depended, matters indeed that challenged their whole care and attention, both to receive them rightly, and transferr them faithfully. In these, when they tell us (as they often do plainly and unanimously) what they were taught, and what they found believed generally through the whole Church: Let their affirmation be as definitive as *Pythagoras*'s to his Disciples; in these it is too mild a word to say, have they not reason to take it unkindly to be rejected? Be it sacrilege but to question their veracity; but on the other side many cases too there are wherein I can in no wise venter to give sentence upon their evidence; Such are most, if not all the now controverted poynts between the *Romish* Church and ours; and as in my former Letter, levelling at these, I could not admit the Fathers for witnesses authentical enough, whereon to pass a Verdict in many cases of Religion; so likewise I must again profess in this, that I am as farr as ever from allowing them in these such a determining or convincing Authority; witnesses of such an over ruling testimony, though they bear the name of witnesses, are judges in effect, and they do give the Law, though another pronounce it. Now to be Judges,

I could cite you many paſſages wherein they themſelves do utterly renounce the pretenſion; and you ſay your ſelf, that their modeſty will not let them be troubled when they are recuſed for ſuch. Neither will I wrong that vertue of theirs ſo much, as to embrace their teſtimonies with any cloſer adherence then it ſelf deſires. For be they what they will in point of interpreting to us the Doctrins of Church and Scripture, I am ſure they are the beſt declarers and limiters of their own, both for their proper ſenſe, and the degrees of our receiving them. Now that I have explained the ſenſe of my former Letter, let me tell you the deſigne both of that and this; It was to expreſs unto you in the generall (induſtriouſly avoiding particular queſtions) how little certainty or ſatisfaction, I think, can be found on either ſide, that ſhall rely on the Fathers teſtimonies for a clear determination of our differences. I confeſs I lancht into the Ocean of them with eager hopes of ſuch a diſcovery, and from them at length can draw juſt as certain concluſions as Sea-men of the Soyle and dimenſions of old *Braſil*

The reaſons prevalent with me of the uncertainty, or rather in my conceit impoſſibility of drawing out of the Fathers any ſuch proofs either way in our controverſes, whereon an inquiring and judicious perſon ſhould be obliged

obliged to relie and acquieſce, are ſo amply and ſo learnedly ſet down by Mr. *Dailby* in *Emploides peres*, that I think little of material or weighty can be ſaid on this Subject, that his rare and peircing obſervation hath not anticipated: But becauſe you will expect from me ſomewhat more then a bare reference, take in ſhort the chief inducements I will ſet down as briefly and perſpicuouſly as I can; not to inſiſt upon the more frequent ones, namely, the few writings extant of the Primitive Doctors of the firſt, ſecond, and third ages of Chriſt; The many ſuppoſititious, children that bear the name of Fathers, they do not ſo much as *Ore* refer; the alterations, raſures, and inſertions which through ignorance, fraud or maliciouſneſs, have defaced, maimed, and corrupted even thoſe few monuments that remain of venerable antiquity; I ſay, (not to dwell upon theſe, ſuppoſing that in your fair and noble way of ratiocination, you will not draw arguments from any, but ſuch as are on both ſides received for intire and legitimate pieces, differences being rightly reconcileable only by ſuch mediums as both parties conſent in) thoſe which ſeem of greateſt force with me to invalidate their authority in our queſtions, are theſe Four.

Firſt, Their contradictions to one another.

Secondly, Their variance from themſelves.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, their repugnances both to Papists and Protestants.

Fourthly, and lastly, Their want of ability in many points of our controversies; in most, of will to decide them.

Their thwartings of one another both in their writings, and votes in Councels, will easily appear to any man that shall but with indifferent observation survey their works; and this in matters of government, of practise, and of belief, which are the three particulars, wherein you advise me out of the Fathers to judge the conformity of your Church, or ours to antiquity.

For their Clashings in point of government, to name the superiority of the Sea of *Rome*, will be enough to call to your memory the Epistles of * *Leo* contrary to the 28. Canon of the Fathers of the Councel of *Calcedon*, who had elevated that of *Constantinople* to an equal height with the other: And likewise those Epistles of *Gregory* the great, 32. *ad Maurit.* 34. *Constant. L.* 4. wherein he enveighs in sharpe terms against whosoever should take upon him the title of Universal Bishop; hardly reconcileable with those passages of the Fathers that the Roman Doctors cite for the Popes supremacy, and least of all which the practice of *Bonifacе* the

* *Epist.* 53. *ad Anatol.* 54. *ad Martian.* 55. *ad Pulcher.* 56. *ad Martine.* 61. *ad Juvenal.*

3d, that soon after assumed the Appellation.

To name the question of Appeals to *Rome* will suffice to draw an acknonledgment from you, of the great contestations between the African Bishops and the Roman, condemning that point; which was likewise oppositely decreed by the Synods of *Sardis* and *Calcedon. Concil. Sard. Can.* 3. 2*Concil. Calced. Can.* 9.

To name the election of Bishops, will be sufficient to recal to your thoughts the direct opposition in that point of the Fathers, of the eighth Generall Councell, in their two and twentieth Canon, against what *Cyprian* taught at large to be Apostolick tradition; to wit, that the people should have their votes also in the choice of Bishops. *Epist.* 68. *p.* 166.

And lastly, not to dwell too long upon the least material point, you will easily be put in minde, how that which is delivered by many, and particularly by *Epiphanius*, *p.* 908. against *Arrius* for a received sense of the Church, touching the preeminence of a Bishop above a Presbyter, is flatly impugned by S. *Jerom. Ep. ad Occan.* 83. *p.* 614. and others.

Their clashings about matters of practice are altogether as obvious.

Call but to minde *Victors* heats against the Bishops of *Asia*, touching the observance

of

of Easter day. *Tatianus* and *Tertullian*'s tenents concerning marriage, against the opinion of so many Fathers as would be endless to name: But because the first was declared an Heretick for holding all marriage pollution, & the last for esteeming the second unlawful; I beseech you turn over S. *Jerom's* Epistles to *Furia*, to *Agerachia*, and weigh some passages in his first book against *Jovinian*; And then tell me not how far he is from making Marriage a Sacrament of the Church; but how far his words are from importing the others Heresy.

Cast but your Eie upon that passage of *Origen, Cont. Cels. l.* 5. to *p.* 479. Where speaking of Angels, he saith, that in consideration of their divine nature, they are sometimes in the Scriptures called gods, but not so as that we should be commanded to adore them, or worship them with divine honors, although they be the conveyers of Gods gifts unto us: for al desires, al prayers, al deprecations, al thanksgivings, are to be sent up to God the Lord of all things, by the high Priest who is above all Angels, who is the living Word and God. Be pleased likewise to consider the 394. *pag.* of *Athanasius* in his first Oration against the *Arrians*, where he teaches that God onely is to be worshipped, &c. And inform me how I shall comprimise the matter betwixt them and those passages of other Fathers alledged

by *Bellarmine*, for the worſhip and invocation of Saints. *L. de Beatitudine ſanctorum. c.* 13. Where thoſe which he cites out of *Juſtine* and *Auguſtine*, are not like the reſt ſo impertinent, but they may ſtand in ſome oppoſition with the two above mentioned.

Let me but remember you of the opinion that Heretiks ought to be baptized, ſo contradicted by *Optatus*, by *Auſtine*, and generally by all that impugne the *Donatiſts*, which was notwithſtanding moſt peremtorily maintained by *Tertullian*, *Cyprian Ep. ad Pompeium*, *& Firmilian*, ſo far as that *Cyprian* for this cauſe brake into moſt notorious heats againſts *Stephanus* Biſhop of *Rome*; (both *Stephanus* and *Cyprian*, urging tradition for contrary Doctrines) and *Firmilian* againſt all the Roman Church in general, ſaying, in an Epiſtle of his, which is the ſeventy fifth among *Cyprian*'s works; that *Rome* did not in all things obſerve the tradition of the Apoſtles, and in vain boaſted of their Authority. Accord I beſeech you that paſſage of S. *Auſtin*, Sern. 17. *de verbis Apoſt.* (*Injuria eſt pro Martyre orare*) with the practiſe of the Church in that point, which appears to have been general, and is recorded in divers of the Fathers; as *Clemens*, *Cyprian*, *Auſtin* 17. *Serm. de verbo Apoſt.* and particularly by *Epiphanius* againſt *Aerius*, *p.* 911. Laſtly, in point of con-

confeſſion & penitence be pleaſed to confront thoſe paſſages of *Chryſoſtome : Homil. de pœnit. & confeſſ.* It is not neceſſary (ſaith he) that thou ſhouldeſt confeſſe in the preſence of witneſſes ; let the inquiry of thy offences be made in thy thought, let this judgement bee without a witneſſe, let God only ſee thee confeſſing. And again, in *Epiſt. ad Heb. c.* 12. *Hom.* 31. I do not ſay to thee, bring thy ſelf upon the Stage, nor accuſe thy ſelfe unto others ; and likewiſe that of St. *Auguſtine, Confeſſ. lib.* 10. *cap.* 3. What have I to doe with men, that they ſhould hear my Confeſſions, as though they could heal my diſeaſes ? Be pleaſed, I ſay, to confront theſe with ſome paſſages of other Fathers cited by *Arcudius* upon that ſubject; and likewiſe by *Bellarmine l.* 3. *c.* 2. *de Pœnitentiâ.* and confeſſe the Fathers in matter of practiſe, as well as of government, irreconcileable.

Their contradictions in matters of Belief, are infinite; I ſhal only ſumme up ſuch as I eſteem moſt important, either in the points themſelves which they concern, or in relation to our controverſies in the Doctrine of the Trinity : That of *Juſtine Martyr, p.* 357. againſt *Tryphon,* which cannot be ſalved from making a diſtinction of Nature betwixt the Father and the Son : That of *Tertullian, adverſ. Prax. c.* 9, 10. *Pater tota ſubſtantia eſt, Filius vero*

derivatio totius & portio; and many other paſſages in the ſame Book: That of *Origen tract. in Joan. tom.* 3. where he implies little leſs, as *Genebrard* obſerves, then that the Father is as much above the Sonne and the Holy Ghoſt, as they above the Creatures. That of *Theodoret, part* 3. *Concil. Epheſ. p.* 496. where refuting *Cyrils* ninth *Anathema*, he ſaith, that in it *Cyril* doth anathematize all the Apoſtles, and the Arch-Angel *Gabriel* himſelfe; whilſt impiouſly and blaſphemouſly, (they are his words) he curſeth ſuch as doe not believe the Holy Ghoſt to proceed from the Sonne: I can eaſilier accord theſe Doctors with *Arrius*, then with *Athanaſius*, or the three hundred and eighteenth Fathers of the firſt *Nicene* Councell: of the ſtate of the Soule after death, in point of reward and puniſhment; and likewiſe concerning Chriſts deſcent into Hell; I could here cite you multitudes of oppoſitions; but I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeake of theſe in another place.

Laſtly, touching the Euchariſt, in my opinion, the moſt important Article of any we differ in, let me marſhall up the Fathers oppoſitions ſomewhat more at large, That of *Juſtin in Apol.* 2. The ſanctified food (ſaith he) wherewith our fleſh and blood by converſion, are nouriſhed, we are taught to be the fleſh and blood of Jeſus incarnate, being made ſuch by

the

the word of prayer, after the ſame manner as Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour by the Word of God took on him fleſh and blood for our ſalvation. How will it ſuit with the latter part of the fortieth *Chapt.* of *Tertull. lib.* 4. againſt *Marcion*, where his whole Argument runs upon this, That in the Euchariſt, the Bread and Wine are the figure and repreſentation of Chriſts Body, (for it would have been a very extravagant argument to one that denied, as *Marcion* did, Chriſt himſelfe to have a body of fleſh, to alledge that bread was the fleſh of his body) his words are, Having profeſt (ſaith he ſpeaking of our Saviour) a deſire to eat the Paſſover, he took bread, and having diſtributed it to his Diſciples, he made it his body, ſaying, *This is my Body*, that is, the figure of my Body; of which it could not have been the Figure, if he had not in truth a Body. And again, with that other paſſage of the ſame Author, *lib. de anima, chap.* 14. The taſte of the Wine which he conſecrated for a memoriall of his blood: and alſo with that. *lib.* 1. againſt *Marcion. cap.* 14. The bread by which he repreſents his body; I dare not tranſlate the reſt, *Etiam in ſacramentis proprius egens mendicitatibus creatoris.* Survey that paſſage of *Cyrillus Hieroſol. Catech. cap.* 4. Under the form of Bread, his Body is given thee; and under the form of Wine, his Blood. And again, know-

ing, and holding this for a certainty, that the bread which we see is not bread, though our taste finde it to be so: So how this will sound with that place of St. *Austin* upon the 98. *Psalm*, where he bringeth in our Saviour speaking of this matter after this manner: You shall not eat of this body which you see, nor drink that blood which they shall shed which will crucifie me; I have commended a certain Sacrament unto you, that being spiritually understood, will quicken you.

Next, consider those passages of *Gregory Nissene*, quoted by *Bellarmin*; we believe (saith he) the Bread rightly sanctified by the Word of God, to be changed into the Body of God the Word. And again a little after, This doth the vertue of the benediction effect, changing the nature of what we see (Bread and Wine) into the Body of the Lord: To which I oppose that of *Theodoret*, *Dialog.* 2. The mysticall Symbols are not removed from their own nature after sanctification; but remain in their former substance, form and figure; And *Dialog.* 1. Our Lord, saith hee, in delivering those mysteries, called the bread Body; and the mixture in the Cup, Blood; And soon after saith he, our Saviour inverted the names, giving to his Body the name of Symbole, and to the Symbole the name of his Body; so having named himself Vine, he called the Symbole

bole Blood. Next let us confront that of *Chryſoſtome Hom de Encœniis*; Is it bread that you ſee? is it wine? do they go into the privie like other meats? away with ſuch a thought; for as wax being put into the fire, unites it ſelf ſo in ſubſtance to it, that nothing thereof remains; ſo imagin here that the myſteries are ſwallowed up in the ſubſtance of the body: Therefore when you approach thereunto, think not that you receive the divine body as from man, but fire from the pincers of the Seraphime which *Eſau* ſaw; ſo think that you partake of the divine body, as if you joyned your lips to his pure and ſpotleſs ſide.

Confront this with that of *Origen* in *Cap.* 15. *Matth.* As nothing (ſayes he) is impure in it ſelfe, but is made ſo to the polluted and incredulous, by his own uncleanneſs and unbeliefe; ſo, neither doth that which is ſanctified by the Word of God and Prayer, in its own nature ſanctifie him that uſeth it. And for as much as belongs to that eating, we are neither defrauded of any good by the not eating, nor enricht with any good by the eating of the ſanctified bread, which for as much as it hath of materials, goes into the belly, and the privie, but becomes uſefull and effectuall according to the proportion of faith, making the ſoul perſpicacious and conſiderate of what is profitable.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, to conclude this point, let me ſet before you, *Macarius Homil.* 17. and *Theophylact*, more remote from one another in this Article of Faith, then in the times wherein they lived: *Macarius* telling us that we offer Bread and Wine the ἀντίτυπον of his Fleſh and Blood; and they which are partakers of the viſible bread, doe eat the fleſh of the Lord ſpiritually. And *Theophylact* teaching the directly contrrary Doctrine upon the 6. of St. *John*: Note here (ſayes he) that the bread which we eat in the myſteries, is not ἀντίτυπον of the Lords fleſh, but the very fleſh of the Lord; and let no body be troubled, that the Bread ſhould be believed fleſh, ſince the bread which he did eat when he walked here, was altered into his body, and made the ſame with his holy fleſh; ſo would the wafer be turned into his fleſh, if Chriſt as man did eat it, will the verieſt Sacramentary ſay.

I have inſiſted the longer upon this particular, as conceiving it the higheſt point of all our Controverſies, and wherein the Fathers ſhould have moſt obliged us, had they left to poſterity a right and unanimous intelligence of that great myſtery of the Euchariſt: But the certaineſt concluſion I can draw from them in this and the reſt, is of the uncertainty of concluding any thing in our differences, from thoſe that differ ſo much amongſt themſelves.

ſelves. *Juſtin Martyr in Orat. Cohort. ad Gent.* Πῶς ἀσφαλὲς τοὺς σώζεσθαι βουλομένους παρὰ τούτων οἴεσθαι δύνασθαι τὴν ἀληθῆ θεοσέβειαν μανθάνειν τῶν μηδ' ἑαυτοὺς πούσαι δυνεθέντων, τὸ μὴ πρὸς ἀλλήλους στασιάζειν μηδ' ἐναντίοι τῆς ἀλλήλων φαίνεσθαι δόξης. He ſhould have my vote for a rare Muſician, that could contrive thoſe their diſcords into a Harmony, fit to be the meaſure either of our practice or beliefe.

My next reaſon is, the Fathers variance from themſelves, a quality of much more prejudice to them then the other: for upon contradiction of teſtimonies, how point-blank ſoever a Judge may fal to examine the fame and reputed integrity of the witneſſes, in which if he find a difference, he will not ſtick many times to pronounce a ſentence according to the intire credit of the men; but who will ever give judgement upon ones evidence who in the ſame buſineſſe is found in contrary tales? And here I could run over moſt of the materialeſt points wherein I made my former inſtances, and produce almoſt out of every Father *pro & con* examples, not onely of variance, but almoſt of as eminent contradiction as that of St. *Auguſtine* concerning Purgatory, in *Serm.* 232. *de Tempore*, where he flatly denies that there is any third place beſides Heaven and Hell, calling them deceivers that teach it. And likewiſe in his 21. Book *de Civitate Dei*, *cap.*

cap. 16. where he absolutely rejects the opinion of any Purgatory flames before the day of Judgement, to another passage in *Cap.* 24, of *Lib.* 21. *de Civitate Dei*, where he seemes positively to affirm it himself: but I forbear, in regard it would be tedious, and likewise for that I am unwilling to press a point of derogation from those holy Fathers (whom I reverence) further then I needs must, it being sufficient for what I intend to inferre, that they appear oftentimes to varie from their owne positions in divers Articles that we dispute of, and others as fully important; in which I may be well excused from the trouble to us both of alledging examples, since *Genebrard* and *Pamelius* thought it their best course to purge, the one (*Origen*) the other (*Tertullian*) from grosse and impious errours in many places, by shewing how they teach the cleane contrary in others; though by the way I must needs say, that *Pamelius* his manner appears to be very extravagant; for as to some poysonous doctrines of *Tertullian*, a *Montanist*, he rightly applies a cure from some other passage of *Tertullian* a Catholick; so at other times to what he thought venomous in *Tertullian* a Catholick, he preposterously prescribes an Antidote out of *Tertullian* an Heretick, as you may see in the eighth of his *Paradoxes*, where he confutes an errour in his *Apologetique*

tique, and *de Teſtimonio Animæ*, Bookes which that Father wrote being a Catholicke, with a paſſage of his Book *de Anima*, compoſed when he was turned *Cataphrygian*; and yet who ſo forward as *Pamelius*, when any paſſage iu ſuch bookes make for us to cry out, away with it, 'twas a ſaying of *Tertullian* a Montaniſt: I may well help my cauſe the beſt I can, by this unſetledneſs of the Fathers, ſince the nobleſt Pillar of the *Roman* Church, Cardinal *Peron*, ſo often wreſts their variance from themſelves ſo much to the advantage of his. See how in his reply to King *James*, *p.* 374. he makes bold with *Gregory* the *Great*, with *Suſſinus*, with *Jerome* touching the *Maccabees* reception into the Canon; wherein I doe not think him more in the wrong in the particular, then I beleeve him right in the generall, (to wit) that the Fathers did often vary their opinions, according to their ſeverall greenneſs or maturity of ſtudies, from whence *Vincentius Lyrenenſis* his directions will follow, *cont. hæreſ. c.* 39. That the Fathers depoſitions are onely to be taken who living in the Catholick Faith and Communion holily and wiſely, did conſtantly teach and perſiſt even untill their death in Chriſt, and further ſuch only as did receive, preſerve, and deliver their doctrines all or the greateſt part, and manifeſtly, and in one and the ſame ſenſe; wherein

what

what use soever some Papists make of that passage, I professe I think we are somewhat lesse beholding to him for the certainty of a rule and evidence to guide our faith by, then to *Archimedes* for his Engine to remove the World: For the Mathematitian disabuses us, and declares that there is not a solid place to be found whereon to fix his Instrument, but th'other leaves us to that vain search of an impossibility; for truly as the case stands, I cannot think it less then an impossibility to know (with any competent assurance) what (in all or almost any of our debated questions) the Fathers hold with all those solid circumstances whereon *Vincentius* his rule is grounded, of Holiness, Wisdom, Catholickness, immutability of the teachers, and perpetual identitie of the doctrins sense, if with years they all improved, I might be comforted a little by relying on their last dictamens; but as I find a S. *Augustin* that with age retracted his errors, so on the other side I meet with a *Tertullian* that going forward in years and experience, went less in his judgement; how happie should we both be in one, that could assure us in the Legion of Fathers, when was the verticle point of each their erudition, whether at their summer or winter solstice; if I give you the notes of it and tell you then only you have it certain, when they

are

are in a perfect and palpable conjunction with Scripture, you will think it but an imperfect indication; if you say that then they were ariv'd to the high point of their perfection, when they were once exactly instructed in the full sence of the Church, I must not admit of that marke whilst you are proving the Churches reception by theirs; and therefore if you please, let us both agree, that for either of us there is no resolving evidence to be taken from the Fathers, that are so irresolute themselves; when you meet with a passage in any of them that stands not with your belief, conceive their judgement not ripe, or rotten when they write it, or that their recantations are lost; the same liberty shall I take in mine; for truly had Saint *Austins* admirable monument of humble ingenuity (as well as high erudition) his Retractations perished as *Origens*, which as Saint *Jerome* saith, he had made in an Epistle to *Fabian* Bishop of *Rome*, did before him, Saint *Austin* might perhaps have had a place in some others Catalogue of heretiques, as well as Saint *Origen* in his; And truly who can secure us that the like mishap hath not befallen others of the Fathers, now taxable with erronious doctrins, by the loss perhaps of some after-survey of their own works?

Epist. 65. ad Pamach. & Oecan.

My

My Third conſideration is of the Fathers variouſneſs and repugnancies to the Government, practiſe, and belief, of both the Romiſh Church and ours: In which I have prevented the need of examples by many of the inſtances, both of my former Letter and this, as that of the equalitie of Biſhops & Presbyters, that of rebaptizing, that of Angels, that of the Millenaries, &c. to which I will only adde, that which ſo many and moſt particularly S. *Auſtin* delivers of the neceſſity of childrens partaking of the Euchariſt, and his rigor againſt infants unbaptized; ſome of which I take to be beames, all more then motes, fit to be removed out of their eyes, before we can with reaſon reſigne up our own ſences to their guidance and manuduction.

My Fourth concluding reaſon, is, the want of ability in many of the Fathers, in moſt of will to determine the points of controverſie; and this I hope I may ſafely affirm without wrong, either to their abilities or good wills. A general and potential ability to reſolve difficulties every ſtrong reaſon includes, if in the particulars wherein it ſhould be brought forth unto act, there concur (upon propoſal) means of informing ones ſelf, and a will to uſe it: Such an ability thoſe learned Fathers (rich in all the choyce endowments of ſoule) had in moſt ſingular eminence; and as it were

madneſs

madneſs to rob them of thoſe, ſo I think it is neither Logicall, nor prudential, becauſe they were knowing in the general, to attribute to them an actual ability to diſcern ſuch particular queſtions, wherein it is ſo far from appearing that they had the means of informing themſelves, or the will to uſe them, that I ſee no ſignes that in their ages they were ever in propoſal; ſuch and ſo farr from agitation or controverſie (the parents that give life and act to particular abilities) were, as I am perſwaded, in the Primitive times the doctrins of infallibility annexed to a Church of any one denomination, of adoring the Euchariſt for God, of Purgatory with its complements, of Indulgences, and many other choice points of our controverſies; All which I profeſs appear to me as unthought of for the firſt 500. years after Chriſt, as the *Antipodes*, or the *Antartique* pole to *Lactantius*, or *Juſtin Martyr*, that took the heavens to be to the earth but as the flat cover of a box; In theſe I take it to be of no more derogation from them to denie their deciding abilities, then to ſay that they were not able to leave to poſterity, an exact Mapp of *America*, which was not diſcovered in ſo many hundred years after: ſo farr is it from an injurious detraction, that to imagin them ſtudious, definitive, or active in queſtions hardly ever moved, that

had neither profeſt maintainers or impugners, were to imagine them idle, and Aire-beaters. No marvell that to decide ſuch, they ſhould want wills, having neither means nor occaſion to actuate their abilities; or that they ſhould want abilities, having no provocations that might ſtimulate their wills. Thoſe primitive Champions of the Goſpel, the Fathers of the firſt 400. yeares, who in this buſineſſe are moſt to be conſulted with, had their time, their induſtry, their pens ſo inceſſantly exerciſed againſt the common enemy of Chriſt, the Jewes and Gentiles, or elſe againſt thoſe heynous Heretiques, that pretended the name of Chriſtianity, but tended to the utter ſubverſion of it, as the *Ebionites*, the *Samoſatenians*, *Gnoſtiques*, the *Marcioniſts*, and divers other blaſphemous or *Chimerical* Innovators, that they had little leaſure to raiſe to themſelves imaginary enemies to combate with in ſuch ſlight and triviall points as theſe we diſpute of; or if perchance any ſuch were preſented, little care to ſubdue them. But that I may not be thought to frame a diſcourſe upon two falſe ſuppoſitions: The one, that our controverted points are of Articles of Religion little materiall; the other, that in the primitive times there were few of them in agitation, or neglected if they were; let me tell you what induceth me to think ſo.

For

For the first, that they were in themselves little material, or at least so thought by the Fathers (which is all one for our purpose) though now I confesse grown highly important by being injoyned many of them under the pain of *Anathema*'s, to be believed as essentiall to salvation, I collect out of a survey of all those ancient, yea and more modern rolls (where it is likely all necessary points of faith or practice would be recorded) where finding no newes at all of them, I think I may safely conclude them but slight in comparison of what I finde there registred.

The first and prime inducement to me, is, that I meet with them nowhere in Scripture; but this is none to you who doe not allow that to be the perfect reconditory of all necessary Doctrines. The next is, that in the Fathers severall Catalogues of Heretickes, as that of *Philastrius*, *Epiphanius*, and Saint *Austin*; I finde none branded with Heresie, for not holding those Articles imposed on mens beliefs by the Church of *Rome*, and rejected by ours; whose note it is not likely such would have escaped, as had impugned any doctrines believed by them necessary to salvation: But to this perhaps you will say; That the denomination of Heretick was not incurred by the opinions that men held, but by their obstinate persisting in such after the Churches manifests a-

gainſt them, and that upon this reaſon divers who believed not all things neceſſary, might well miſs a place in their denumeration of Hereticks; wherefore ſetting theſe two aſide, becauſe though of much force with me, yet likely to be invalide with you, I onely preſſe upon your conſideration my laſt, and I think, undeniable Reaſon, taken from the non-appearance of ſuch Articles in thoſe ſeverall pieces; wherein the Fathers of ſet purpoſe and deſigne profeſſedly do ſet down all the eſſentiall doctrines of Chriſtianity agreed upon throughout the Church univerſall: Such were their Symboles, ſuch *Irenæus* his unity of Faith in *Lib.* 1. *cap.* 2. Such *Origens* introduction to his Book *de principiis*, ſuch *Tertullians* Rule of Faith in his preſcription againſt Heretickes: Such *Epiphanius* his concluſion of his work, which he calls the ſettlement of truth & aſſurance of immortality; ſuch likewiſe (to fit you with ſome of all Ages) was that work of *Gennadius* (written within theſe two hundred yeares) *De rectâ Chriſtianorum Fide*: I will not ſay in ſome of which, but in all which together, there is not one Article of Faith received by the Church of *Rome*, and rejected by us, ſo much as mentioned, ſave onely in *Epiphanius* of Chriſts diſcent into Hell; a Point variouſly and uncertainly underſtood among the Fathers; as ſhall in another place be demonſtrated.

Now

Now for farther proof of the little agitation or great neglect of our controverted points in the Primitive times (although it will follow of conſequence to what hath been already alledged) yet I beſeech you let me appeal to your own obſervation: Do you know of any of the Fathers for the firſt four hundred years that hath purpoſely and of deſigne compoſed the leaſt Treatiſe of any one of our queſtions? or in ſome other tract handled them ſo much as in a formal digeſtion? Inform me I beſeech you; for I profeſs all the works that ever I have met with of them, appear to have been wholy directed either to deride the Pagans, to confute Philoſophiers, to convince the Jewes, to confound prodigious Hereſies, or deliver precepts of good life, or elſe to expound ſome paſſages of Scripture moſt uſefull to the ſame ends: Theſe appear to me to have been the ſole objects both of their wills and abilities to combate: And ſhall we venture to give ſentence in our intricate diſputes upon words or paſſages, that by the by may ſeem to concern them, either caſually let fall, or directed to other purpoſes, in moſt of which in my conſcience we find our own opinions as rationally, as *Whittington* his turn Lord Major of *London* in the ring of Bells, or ſome melancholy Lover his Miſtriſſes picture in the graine of Wainſcote, and their intentions as rightly as

Eudocia, *Homers*, and another *Virgils*, when they made him Evangelize; ſo little do I regard what they ſay in this our caſe; but to their ſilence I attribute much, and think it ſtrongly expreſſive, but nothing to the advantage of thoſe that impoſe for neceſſary Articles of Faith, Doctrines that thoſe renowned Oracles of the Church either never heard of, or thought not worth their mentioning.

Thus noble Couſin, I have laid before you the principall reaſons that led me to deny the Fathers Teſtimonies to have ſuch a validity whereon we way juſtly paſs a verdict in our queſtions of Religion; which I beſeech you, not to take as meant in a way of further derogation from them then in thoſe very particulars; for there is no man living that in the general payes them more reverence then my ſelf in the higheſt admiration of their erudition and piety. And therefore where I have mark'd out their heats againſt one another, and contradictions, let them be underſtood to have ſprung from holy fervor and zeal in whatſoever they were for the time perſwaded was good and true: when I note their variance from themſelves, let it recommend their ingenuity that would ſo clearly avow their own fallibility: when I tax them for diſſenting from us all in this age, (although S. *Auſtin* when the Donatiſts preſs him with antiquity,

ſticks

sticks not to say that the younger Doctors are sharper-sighted) yet let not my words be driven farther then this modest (since you so call it) flattery to our selves, not of seeing clearer or sharper then they, but onely (by their helps) further, as dwarfs upon Gyants shoulders : And lastly, when I deny them the ability to determine our points of controversies, let it be of no more derogation from their learning and judgement, then it were of lessening to an Ambassador, or of flatterry to his followers, to say, that at a publike audience some of them could give a good account of the things in the lower end of the room, when he him selfe could say little or nothing of them, having onely past them by, with his attentions intirely fixt upon the higher and more noble objects.

These were the Considerations that possest me when I wrote my former Letter; although I had then the leisure but to point at a few of them, (and since I cannot speak to you but with truth and freedom (I must here profess they remain in full force with me still, your Letter having given me great con tentment, but little satisfaction; for I can by no means yeeld, that there is any Assurance, much less infallibility in the Rule which you at the first prescribed, and still insist on, of judging our Controversies by the Fathers; namely, to use our li-

berty of reaſon only in what they teach of themſelves, with confirmations out of Scripture, or probable Arguments; but to reſign it up in an intire and implicite Aſſent, to what they tell us they were taught, and deliver to us as delivered to them for the received ſenſe of the Church; which is to be underſtood (you ſay) not only when they uſe theſe formall poſitive Words, That the Church hath received from the Apoſtles, and holdeth generally ſuch and ſuch a Doctrine; but at other times alſo, when they do but intimate it in their Diſcourſes, (where by the way I muſt needs tell you, I ever thought intimations likelyer to beget Diſputes then to end them.) If in this poſitive Rule you reſerve a Liberty to except ſome particulars ſo delivered, or ſome Catholick Fathers ſo delivering them; Then without more adoe it is evident that this Way, nothing can be decided; for your Adverſaries will claim (in what thwarts them) the like liberty of excepting. If you lay the Rule abſolutely generall, to wit, that what Article ſoever is delivered directly, or by intimation from the Fathers, to have been a received Doctrine of the Church, ought to be ſwallowed for an infallible verity, it will eaſily be made appear, that this method muſt betray you, not only into ſome Proteſtant Tenents, but alſo into beliefs on both ſides confeſſed to be erroneous: It muſt draw you to be

a Millenary, it must draw you to hold a necessity of Childrens partaking the Eucharist; it must draw you to abhor that use of Images as Idolatrous; and finally, it must force you to reject out of the Canon those Books which we esteem Apochryphall; for all these do the Fathers deliver, with somewhat more then intimations that they were taught to them, as derived from the Apostles, and from generall receptions of the Catholique Church.

First, for the doctrine of the *Millenaries*, I conceive you make a right judgement of the originall thereof from *Papias*, whom St. *Jerome* (the best Critick in Ecclesiasticall Antiquity) sayes to have been the first Author of it; which error it is probable the said *Papias* ran into, either by a flattery to win upon the Jewes, or else, as you say, by the gross understanding of a Text in the twentieth of the *Apocalypse*, himself being one but of a dull and easie spirit, which being taken from him by those that reverenced the antiquity and piety of the man, was delivered with recommendation to their successors, and so took possession of most of the Doctors of the following Ages. As for that of *Cerinthus*, I believe with *Sextus Senensis*, that it was a distinct heresie, which fed carnall men with hopes of beastly and sensual delights: for it is not likely that a doctrine taken from such an arch Heretick as

Cerinthus

Cerinthus, could have found ſuch reception among the Chatholick Fathers; and leaſt of all is it probable, that *Cerinthus* could have fathered it upon St. *John*, whom the Apoſtle is ſaid to have deteſted ſo much, that *Iræneus*, *lib.* 3. *cap.* 3. *adverſ. hæreſ.* (a chiefe Champion of the Millenaries) in that very Chapter where (as you ſay) he reckons up the ſucceſſions of Biſhops in divers Churches, relates, that when St. *John* was entring into a Bath where *Cerinthus* waſhed himſelfe, St. *John* no ſooner ſaw him, but he ſtept back, crying out, Let us forſake the place, leſt that enemy of truth draw downe the houſe upon our heads: a fit Authour for ſo foule a Doctrine, but one very unlikely to be believed acquainted with Chriſts whiſpers to St. *John*. But as this enormous part which paſſes alſo with moſt under the name of *Millenaries* hereſie, was generally condemned: ſo the other more ſpirituall of *Papias*, was and is farre from being approved at this day, either by your Church or ours, much more from finding ſo firm and entire aſſent as you will be obliged to give it by your rule of ſwallowing for unqueſtionable and infallible what doctrine ſoever the Fathers deliver as taught unto them, and to be the generall ſenſe of the Chriſtian Church in their times: And for proofe that it was delivered for ſuch by *Papias* (who gloried in nothing

thing more then in being a carefull Collector of the doctrines taught by the Apoſtles(*viva voce*) I referre you onely to *Nicephorus Caliſtus Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib.* 3. *c.* 20.

That *Juſtin Martyr p.* 307. delivered it for ſuch a paſſage in his *Dialogue* with *Tryphon*, will eaſily teſtifie, where he ſaith, that he, and all in all parts orthodox Chriſtians held it, and calls them onely Chriſtians in name, with many other circumſtances of aggravation, that denied it. It is true (as you ſay) he confeſſes a little before, that ſome good and honeſt Chriſtians did not acknowledge it; but this may be an Argument how careleſſe, and oftentimes repugnant to themſelves ſome of the Fathers were in their Writings, or elſe how little ſcrupulous of ſetting to doubtfull doctrines that ſeale which you account ſo ſacred; but it can no way ſalve him from having taught it with thoſe circumſtances which you eſteeme the notes of infallibility. That *Irenæus* took it and taught it to be of Tradition from Chriſt, I think is ſo manifeſt, that it were ſuperfluous to inſiſt upon particular paſſages in that Authour.

And laſtly, to omit *Tertullian*, and others, who clearly (me thinkes) imply as much, though not in the very terms; What can expreſſe more a doctrine rightly delivered, and generally received, then *Lactantius lib.* 7. *Inſtitut.*

ſtitut. cap. 26. his concluſion of his long diſcourſe upon this ſubject; *Hæc eſt doctrina ſanctorum Prophetarum, quam Chriſtiani ſequimur, hoc eſt Chriſtiana ſapientia:*

Secondly, for the neceſſity of childrens partaking of the Euchariſt, although the evident practice of the Church for the firſt ſix hundred yeares, according to all our Records of Antiquity, might excuſe me from proving by any particular inſtance, that ſome of the Fathers taught the neceſſity of it for a received Tradition; yet take this of Saint *Auſtin, lib.* 1. *de peccat. mer. & remiſſ. c.* 24. rightly (ſaith he) doe the Punick Chriſtians call Baptiſme by no other names but Health and Safety; nor the Sacraments of Chriſts body by no other then life, *Unde niſi ex antiquâ, ut exiſtimo, & Apoſtolica traditione qua Eccleſiæ Chriſti inſitum tenent præter Baptiſmum & participationem Dominicæ menſæ, non ſolum non ad regnum Dei ſed nec ad ſalutem & vitam æternam poſſe quenquam hominum pervenire.* So direct a paſſage, that I ſee not how in this point you can avoid the neceſſity either of retracting your Rule of aſſurance, or of incurring an *Anathema* of the Councel of Trent. *Seſſ.* 21. *cap.* 4. *can.* 4. againſt any that ſhould hold this very opinion which you finde ſo delivered, and ſo majeſtically ſealed by Saint *Auſtin.*

Thirdly,

*Thirdly, for the uſe of Images (a point likewiſe of my former letter) to which you ſay that the Fathers do not uſe the Authority or Tradition of the Church to beat it down, I am confident you wil confeſs that affirmation a ſlip of obſervation or memory, when you ſhall but caſt your Eyes upon thoſe paſſages of the Fathers for brevity ſake quoted onely in the Margin; where doubtleſs in ſome at leaſt you will finde the interdiction of them ſo deeply ſtampt with your ſuppoſed great ſeal of Chriſtianity, that if yuo ſtick to your own rule, it will not be enough to ſpeak indifferently of the matter with the Moderator on your ſide, but you muſt be as rigid and ſevere againſt them as you can imagine any warm brother would be at *Edenbourgh*; for I do not think any Zealot of them all can be more invective in this point then moſt of thoſe Fathers were, many to the abhorring of the very Trade of Imagery; but becauſe you do inſiſt ſomewhat upon juſtification of the contrary practiſe at this day in the Romiſh Church, I muſt beg leave to run over your Allegations, and to acquaint you freely how unſatisfied I am in the particulars.

* *Tertul. lib. de Idolatria, Orig. lib. 7 Cont. Celſ. Arnob. lib. 6. Lactan. lib. 2. cap. ult. Epiphan. Ep. ad Johan. Hieroſol. inter oper. Hier. Epiſt. 60. Ambr. de fuga. Secul. cap. 5. Auguſt. de fide cap. 7.*

In the firſt place you evade the Authority of the Primitive Fathers, voucht formerly by

by me, namely, of *Justine* and *Tertullian*, By saying, in regard that idolatry was then fresh in the memory and practice of the World, they might well think it dangerous to admit that which the following Governours of the Church might afterwards introduce upon a good ground of raising devotion in the people, since things of that nature you say, may be convenient at one time, and unfit at another.

And in the next, you labour to justifie the use of images now, by saying, First, that as strong Arguments, and as pregnant passages of Scripture are produced for it, as formerly against it. Secondly, by alledging that these times are secure from the danger of idolatry. And lastly, by affirming that a great good appears in them.

To your infirming of those ancient Authothories in this point, it will be sufficient to put you in minde, that divers of the more modern Fathers, farre enough removed from the vicinity of Paganisme after Christianity had taken possession of the world, were as peremptory *Iconoclasts* as those two I pitcht upon. And for the variance of practice upon variance of times, your reason might hold, had they condemned the religious use of Images onely as inconvenient, and not as in its own nature unlawfull; but what's simply unlawfull at one time,

time, cannot be lawfull at another, without a precept from God, which you ſay in your firſt words upon this ſubject, You did not beleeve to have been given herein.

To you firſt juſtification of this Practiſe, I muſt needs ſay, that for the ſtrong Arguments for it, to which I am yet a ſtranger, I ſhould be glad to be acquainted with them; but for the Texts of Scripture ſo pregnant as you ſpeak of, truly I ſhould be ſorry to meet with them; for although where I finde in holy Writ appearing repugnances, and difficult intricacies, I am as apt as any body (having perhaps moſt reaſon for it of any) to accuſe my own ignorance, and to preſerve all veneration to what I finde there; yet I confeſs it would trouble me much, and be of dangerous temptation, ſhould I meet with a paſſage in the ſacred volumne, as palpably direct for the uſe of Images, as I am ſure the ſecond Commandement is againſt it.

For your Second Allegation, that theſe times are ſecure from the danger of Idolatry, ſome proofs would be neceſſary, ſince I am farr from underſtanding them to be ſo; were that ſin committed then only when the outward or inward act of veneration accompanied with that belief, and reliance which belongs to the Creator, is exhibited to, and terminated in the creature, I ſhould then

be

be of your opinion, and pronounce theſe times in little danger of Idolatry; but withall, my vote ſhould alſo goe to acquit all ages from the Crime, as well as the preſent. For I do not think that the fowleſt Idolaters of the Heathen ever arrived to that height of ſtupidity, as to take thoſe low and materiall objects of their devotion for God Almighty: Nay, the more beſtial their Idolatry was, as of the *Ægyptians* and *Romans*, in worſhiping the vileſt creatures, the leſſe probability is there that they conceived the eſſence of the Deity to dwell under thoſe contemptible forms that they adored; as I think the Jewes little guilty of beleeving that the Calfe which they had made of their ear-rings, though ſeemingly deified by their veneration, was the great God that hath wrought his wonders among them, but ſince it is as formal Idolatry to frame to ones ſelf, out of low, limited and corruptible formes, reſemblances of the incomprehenſible Deity, and to impart to them any kinde of divine honour, whether you pleaſe to call them of adoration, of ſervice, or of pious religion, ſince to worſhip the true God after an unfitting manner, involves men as well in this ſin, as the ſervice of a falſe God: ſince (I ſay) theſe practiſes as well as the other, amount to Idolatry; yea ſuch, as for my part, I beleeve the Jews and Pagans were rarely guilty of any

greater

greater amidſt their higher abominations. I muſt profeſſe, I think the world at preſent extreamly liable to the ſin; yea, many of the *Romiſh* Church deeply plunged therein by the eaſie abuſe (if not by the ſingle uſe) of Images in their prayers: and this not onely the ſimpler ſort, but even the learned Doctors themſelves, if one may believe them of themſelves: *Thomas* of *Aquine* ſayes, *Summ. part.* 3. *queſt.* 25. *Art.* 3. and hath many followers in it, That the ſame reverence is to be given to the Image of Chriſt, that is to Chriſt himſelfe; And ſeeing Chriſt is adored with the adoration of *Latria*, that his Image alſo is to be adored with the adoration of *Latria*; ſo farre is that great Doctor and his ſectators tranſported, whom I doe chuſe much rather to brand with the imputation of idolatry, then many others of his own ſide, as learned, that impugne his doctrine with ſacriledge: there being, as I conceive, no medium between thoſe two impieties, where one denies adoration of the higheſt kinde, to that unto which another payes it.

Thirdly, for the great good which you ſay appeares in the uſe of Images; I am perſwaded it doth but appeare: it is pretended they help the memory, and excite devotion in the people. If by aids of memory, be underſtood onely in the generall, that the lively repreſen-

tation of some holy History, is likely to call better thoughts into our mindes, then a prophaner; I like it well; by the same reason that the coursest picture of CHRIST crucified, ought in a good Christians Cabinet take the wall of a *Venus* of *Titian*; the one being apt to mortifie us through the same sense whereby the other may inflame us: but if by the help of memory any thing be meant of more particular assistance in the directing of our prayers, I think Images do just as much good in that point, as the art of memory would doe to your exellent naturall one, that is, help to dizzy and distract it: or if by excitement to devotion, be meant any particular stimulation and guidance to the righteſt way of true devotion or furnishing us with a proper means of addressing it to the right and originall object, I conceive them then so farre from being of good use in this kinde, that I hold their very stimulations to devotion dangerous; they excite, they warm the zeale of the ignorant, 'tis true; but with those strange fires that caused such combustions in Israel, whilst so many (as *Gul. Parienſis de Legibus, cap.* 23. confesses) not distinguishing between the Image and the thing, adore the picture in stead of what it represents; wherein far lesse sinfull were a luke-warm piety rightly applied, then the ardenteſt devotion misdirected, by how much

much ſinnes of omiſſion are more pardonable then of act; and to worſhip the true God leſſe intenſly, then to ſerve a falſe one zealouſly. Of this danger there cannot be a better witneſſe, for all his mincing of the matter, then *Gregory* the Great, (in his Epiſtle to *Cirenus* Biſhop of *Marcelles*, in which that paſſage is which you cite) who there adviſeth the Biſhop to excuſe to his flock the breaking down of Images in the Church, by alledging that he was forc'd to that Act by the peoples abuſing that to adoration, which was erected onely for inſtruction of the ignorant and illiterate in matter of hiſtory: The Biſhop truly was beholding unto him, for furniſhing him with ſuch an excuſe, which might ſerve to juſtifie all the fierceſt *Iconoclaſts*, ſince all the good that imagination can preſent in the uſe of Images throughout the whole Univerſe, cannot amount to recompence the miſchiefe of one poore ſouls betraying to idolatry.

For my part, I doe conceive that good uſe might be made of holy pictures, but hardly by the vulgar, which makes me wonder at that ſaying of *Gregory* which you glance at, whereas he ſeems to adapt them to the ignorant, ſtiling them the bookes of the unlettered: For beſides the ſmall Divinity (me thinkes there is ſo little Philoſophy) in the ſaying; Books truly they may be for ſuch Ignoramuſes as can-

not read and will not heare, wherein they may perhaps learn matters of fact, (as some children that have an aversion from their book, are taught their Letters in Dice) but are very unlikely to profit in any right devotion; had he appropriated the use of Images soley to the most knowing and speculative, it would have been more tolerable: such perhaps one might believe likely from materiall and sensible representments to raise spirituall meditations surpassing sense; and by the greater likelihood and glory of the object, to perfect the more, and purifie their abstraction from all servile dependance on materiality; some such extaticall Contemplator as *Dionysius* that beares the name of the *Areopagite* (a notable Disciple I am sure of *Platos*, what ever he was of *Pauls*) might perchance have an Art of erecting his soule by Images, to some admirable intelligence of the true one onely to be adored. If they were hideous and deformed, he could inform you that the propereſt presentation of invisible things to sense, is by the unlikelieſt representations; and that in their contemplation our soule is more elevated by * disagreeing images, then by resembling ones. And therefore that the Celestiall natures are expreſt unto us usually in Scriptures by such images as are irreconcile-

* *Dionys. Areop. de Cœlest. Hierarch.* cap. 2.

able

able with the Originals they ſignifie, as of Eagles, Lions, Bulls, &c. to which I will be bold only to ſay this, that I believe more would have aſſented to his ſpeculatiõ, I am ſure more would have underſtood it, had he inferred, that ſince God was pleaſed to paint out himſelf & his miniſtring ſpirits in ſuch incompatible Images, we ſhould not attempt the making ſuch repreſentations as we doe of thoſe incomprehenſible forms. If the images were of ſweet proportion & luſter, he would find perchance a way in his negative Divinity, the more beauteous they were, to attribute the more to thoſe celeſtiall natures, by * removing from the ſplendidſt glories of the ſenſe, all capacity of proportiõ from their ſpirituall perfection; ſuch uſes as theſe of Images, might perhaps be credible with the *Pere Golu* of a *Dionyſius* in his Raptures, who could fancy to himſelf all the ceremonies of the Church, and the formal and majeſtick diviſions of our Temples, after the manner of that at *Jeruſalem*, before that our religion had any but privat Houſes, or Barnes; who could perform religious viſits to the body of the virgin *Mary*, either foure yeares after ſhe was dead, or as many before himſelfe was a Chriſtian, for elſe his Eccleſiaſticall Hierarchy, and his Epiſtle to *Policarp* cannot ſtand with Chronology. But to concieve that the

* *Dionyſ. Areop. de Div. dom. c. 13. & de Myſt. Theolog. c. 2.*

vulgar, the ignorant, ſuch whoſe ſouls are immerſt (as you ſay) in the fæculency of matter, ſuch as *Mahomet* fitted his law to, the multitude, to whom as *Avicenna* ſayes in his book *de Almahad*, their Prophet was fain to promiſe a heaven proportionable to their ſoules, all of ſenſuality, ſweets to be taſted, beauties viſible, delights palpable, ſuch who to abſtract from matter, and to conceive any thing of incorporeall natures, had need be raiſed by ſome rarer Art then *amphibious* Mathematicks, which becauſe they partake of both Natures, of the one in their inherence, of the other in conſideration, are called by *Proclus*, the bridge and ladder to pure and compleat abſtractions; ſuch in whom *Tertullians* ſaying, erroneous in the general, is verified in their particular, *Anima animæ ſenſus eſt.* To preſcribe I ſay, that ſuch ſhould be taught, as *Gregory* ſaith the ignorant ought to be by Images, whom to adore (he being infinite and inviſible) or how to adore (ſince that muſt be free and ſpiritually) by fixing & faſtning them upon viſible, finite, corporeall and engaging objects of the ſenſe, appeares to me as judicious a courſe, as if a Pilot ſhould caſt an Anchor that his ſhip might ſaile the faſter. Let me period this queſtion with a much more divine, as well as more *Platonick* ſentence of *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, All ſorts of Images

(ſayes

(ſayes he) are directly forbidden by *Moſes*,

Ὡς μὴ τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς προσανέχομεν, ἐπὶ δὲ τὰ νοήτα μετίωμεν ἐξ ἐντελοῦς. οὐ γὰρ τὴν τοῦ Θείου σεμνότητα ἡ ἐν ἑτοίμῳ τῆς ὄψεως συνήθεια καὶ τὴν νοητὴν οὐσίαν δι' ὕλης σεβάζεσθαι ἀτιμάζειν ἔστιν αὐτὴν δι' αἰσθήσεως.

Now laſtly, for concluſion of this part of my diſcourſe, to ſhew, that according to your Rule, you muſt reject out of the Canon thoſe bookes which we eſteem *Apocryphall*, I need no other proofs then that of * *Jerom*, *Judith* (ſaith he) *Tobiæ & Maccabæorum libros legit quidem Ecleſia, ſed inter Canonicas Scripturas non recipit*, added unto that of *Ruffinus* (his great adverſary in other things) in his expoſition of the Apoſtles Creed, ſo ſolemne a paſſage, and alone ſo ſufficient, as being moſt eminently ſignalized with all your circumſtances of infallibility, that I cannot forbeare ſetting it down at large: *Ideo* (ſaith he) *quæ ſunt novi & veteris Teſtamenti volumina quæ ſecundum majorum traditionem per ipſum Spiritum ſanctum inſpirata creduntur, & Eccleſiæ Chriſti tradita, competens videtur in hoc loco evidenti numero ſicut ex patrum monumentis accepimus deſignare*. And accordingly he denumerates onely thoſe bookes received by us for Canonicall, and goes on, *Hæc ſunt quæ Patres intra Canonem concluſerunt ex quibus Fidei noſtræ aſſertiones conſtare voluerunt: ſcien-*

* *Præf. in lib. Solo. Epiſt. 115.*

dum tamen est quod & alii qui non Canonici, sed Ecclesiastici à majoribus appellati sunt: and reckons up all those which we reject; and thus concludes, *Hæc nobis à patribus, ut dixi, tradita, ut opportunum visum est hoc in loco designare ad institutionem eorum qui prima sibi Ecclesiæ ac Fidei elementa suscipiunt, ut sciant ex quibus sibi fontibus verbi Dei hauriendæ sint pocula.* Should I meet with any Article of the Romish Church signalized, as I said before, so eminently as this of ours, with all the circumstances, which you count the Notes of infallibility; as little as I agree with you in the generall, I confesse would stagger me in the particular: And therefore I doe not see how you can avoid either the retracting your rule of assurance, or by concurring in this point with us to incur another heavy *Anathema* of the Councel of TRENT, *Sessione quarta*. To these severall instances I could add many more as considerable in other points both of Governmen-, Practice, and Beliefe, but that so tedious a recitation would seem a designe to weary as well as convince you: besides that, to destroy the universality of your maxime, and to bring you to exceptions, one pregnant objection is as good as a thousand, and that is all I need to doe. For as I said before, if in your positive Rule you once take the liberty to except against particular Doctrines, or particu-

lar

lar Fathers delivering them, I may then without any further proof flatly conclude, that nothing can be this way concluded, since your adversaries will likewise claim in whatsoever shall thwart them, an equall liberty of excepting.

Now Cousin, give me a leave to examine a little neerer, the three grounds whereon you build the pretended certainty of this method, in resolviug your differences out of the Fathers declarations; as I collect your sense, they are these. First, That they were faithfull Collectors of the general traditions of the Church in their times. Secondly, that they are sincere conveyers of them to us: And thirdly, that the Traditions collected and conveyed by them, are infallible. Should I grant them all to be true, it would not follow that theywere sufficient, till it did appeare (which I think never will, though for the present we wil suppose it) that there were general Traditions preserved in the Church concerning all those points which we dispute of; but unlesse they appear to be true, I am sure they cannot passe for sufficient.

First, That they were faithfull Collectors of all the Traditions of the Church; where, in faithful, I suppose you comprise careful & able: for in the other single sense of fidelity, faithfull hath most proper relation to the following

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condition of Conveyers; induſtry and ability being as fully requiſite in this the Collecting part as integrity: To this I ſay, that as in one place I have formerly profeſt how I believe them ſuch faithfull Collectors of the Churches receptions, that is, carefull and able, as well as ſincere in many things of greateſt importance; ſo in another, I think, I have ſaid enough wherby to prove it unlikely that in things of leſſe moment, ſuch as our controverſies, the Primitive Fathers did apply their care and abilities to ſound the bottome of them; whether in this way of collecting the Traditions of the Church concerning them or any other; Induſtry requiring alwayes ſtimulations in the particular buſineſſes, where we are to expect it; and likewiſe ſome leaſure & remiſſion from other preſſing occupations. Both which the Primitive fathers totally wanted, by little provocation in our caſes, & inceſſant allarms in more weighty ones. So that to your firſt ground, I will onely make of new this demand: Was the knowledge and Collection of the Churches traditions & receptions eaſie and evident to all carefull inveſtigators, or hard and difficult? If the latter, which I believe, ſince ſo many circumſtances are requiſite to the exact knowledge of the Churches Traditions; as firſt certain evidence, what is that Church Univerſal whoſe Traditions are ſo ſacred. Secondly,

condly, a clear and unconfus'd delivery of the ſame unto them; & laſtly, not only an exquiſite apprehenſion of the ſubſtance of all the doctrines, but a perfect intelligence of the degrees & neceſſities either of belief or practiſe wherein the Church did hold them: If thus hard, I ſay, & intricate, the Fathers being men, and liable (as you confeſs) to error, how can we be ſecured that they did not oftentimes miſtake them, ſince it is evident, that ſometimes they did? If facile and obvious, which is likelieſt you take them to be, ſince you prefer them before Scriptures, becauſe that you ſay is difficult; how comes it that they diſagree, having a plain eaſie and infallible Directory, whereby to regulate and conform their judgements? And truly Couſin, ſuppoſing it ſuch, I know not how to free divers of them that diſſent from one another in matters where Tradition is vouched, from the imputation of ſtupidity, either in not underſtanding the common and manifeſt tenents of the Church; or of perverſneſs & malice, that knowing them would not own them; but by arguing from their variances, that they were not all in all matters of Religion carefull Collectors of the Churches traditions; which, if you once admit, we cannot think to conclude any thing from the Fathers till ſome third authority aſſure us, which of the many (for ought appeares to us) of equall abilities

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and zeale were the careful Collectors, which not; and in what particulars they were so, and in what not.

To your second ground, that they are sincere Conveyers unto us of the traditions of the Church, I say, that to the just title of sincere Conveyers, two conditions are requisite: the one affirmative, that they should deliver to us (with all their right, that is, clearness, prespicuity & identitie of sense as they receved them) all the right traditions of the Church. And that the Fathers are not likely to have done this, may be inferred from what hath been said before of their want of care and industry in collecting the Churches sense concerning our affaires, matters being seldome right in the second digestion which were not good in the first. The other is negative, that they should not deliver any thing for a tradition of the Church universall, that was not rightly and evidently such. That the Fathers were not scrupulous in this point, my former instances I conceive have sufficiently evinced. Wherein it is evident with what confidence, to doubtful, yea and erroneous doctrines that themselves affected, they set this pretended great seal of infallibility. Beleeve me, Cousin, that saying of St. *Hierom*, *Ingenium suum facit Ecclesiæ Sacramenta*, belongs not onely unto *Origen*; it may without wrong be extended

extended to moſt of the Fathers that I have been acquainted with. And no marvel that they ſhould ſometimes in heat of diſpute be tranſported to vouch for tradition what was not, when ſo often they ſwerve from what was apparently the univerſal reception of the Church, as hath been made evident by many examples. From which I do not infer that the Fathers had alwayes ſuch erroneous beliefs as their words would many times import, but onely that it is likely that they (who in heat of diſpute, or for ſome ends which they thought very important, would recede in their expreſſions from the confeſt tradition of the Church in ſuch high conſtitutive points of Chriſtian Religion) would not be ſcrupulous in the like heats, or upon the like ends to miſapply the ſeal of tradition to ſome points of leſſer importance. For though it appear a greater falſehood to ſet a ſeal ſurreptitiouſly where it belongs not, yet it is neerer to Rebellion not to conforme to that Authority where the Royal ſeal is manifeſtly ſtamp'd. There hath enough been ſaid to manieſt that the Fathers (that would ſometimes thus licenſe themſelves, be the occaſion what it will, and the end how pious ſoever) cannot paſs for Candid or ſincere conveyers of all the Churches receptions unto us; and if leſs punctual in any, ſure likelieſt in our controverted doctrines

ctrines, which rarely had they the occasion to mention: but as serving to greater ends, there were so many circumstances that might tempt and lead them from the exact punctualities of a sincere conveyer, that I am not much scandalized at their prevarication.

You shall find that where *Gregory Neocæs, Ariensis*, said, that the Father and the Son, according to our conceptions were two, but one in *Hypostasis*; St. *Basil*, *Ep.* 64. *p.* 849. *Tom.* 2. excuses him, saying, that it was spoken ἐ δογματικῶς ἀλλ' ἀγωνιστικῶ, and that being to perswade a Gentile, he thought it not necessary to be exact in his expressions; and that it may be convenient sometimes to indulge a little, to the use and manner of those one would perswade, that they may not fly back from what is more necessary and seasonable; by which means *Gregory*, saith he, may have let slip many expressions that Hereticks perhaps will lay hold of for their advantage: likewise where *Dionysius Alexandrinus* had stiled the Son the workmanship of the Father, as the ship to the ship-wright, and many other expressions that no Arian could mend; *Athanasius* is ready with an Apologie for him, *p.* 551. 552. *Tom.* 1. *de Sent. Dionis.* They were saith he, κατ' οἰκονομίαν γεγραμμένα, and are not to be taken maliciously.

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If that *Thaumaturgus*; and that other great pillar of the Church *Dionyſius* did licenſe themſelves ſo far as to let their expreſſions (by which we are to judge of them, not by what they reſerved in their hearts) ſwerve in ſo notorious a manner from the moſt eminent tradition of the Church, in ſuch a grand fundamental, were it not irrational in us to expect from them and the reſt a punctual tranſmiſſion of the Churches traditions in all ſuch petty points as moſt of ours, ſcarce ever touch'd upon by them, but in the way of thoſe important diſputes, which you ſee warm'd them even to ſuch great overſights? If thoſe two excellent and moſt zealous of the Fathers, *Athanaſius* and *Baſil* were ſo forward in their excuſe, allowing them a liberty both for their policy and paſſion in diſpute to dally with a main tradition, were it not too unjuſt a rigour in us to brand them with the imputation of falſehood and ignorance; becauſe, forſooth, they deliver us not with an exact fidelity the tradition of the Church in our queſtions, concerning which it is to be doubted, whether there was any general tradition in the Church or no? I profeſs I am as far from laying ſo heavy an imputation upon them, either for their negligence herein or falſity, as I am from expecting ſuch a ſincere punctuallity, as you promiſe your ſelf from them:

them: Furthermore, beſides the heats, the artifice of Diſputes, and deſire of victory, which in conteſtations of great moment might eaſily through their humane frailty make them ſtrain a Point by the by in ſome article leſs dangerous, when from it they may draw concluſions of great advantage in the main. And beſides that, as a great * Prelate lately made the Obſervation, Men are apt to think that they can never run far enough from what they hate; and ſo by a very naturall motion runne upon the other extreame, as a Father that in deteſtation of *Neſtorius* would confound that hereſie by the receptions of the Church, might eaſily overſhoot himſelf ſo farr, as to make the Church ſpeak for *Eutiches*; in averſion from *Arianiſm*, make the Church ſpeak for *Sabellius*, and in profligation of the *Manichees* to ſhake hands with *Pelagius*; and ſo much more becauſe the danger could hardlier be foreſeen, they are likely to have tuned the voice of the Church, either to the Romiſh or Proteſtant Key, according as either was at the time moſt oppoſite to the Adverſarie they combated; Beſides all theſe, I am perſwaded that many of the Fathers held it a pious fraud to gain the ſubverſion of a great error by ſowing a little one, not foreſeeing how proceſs of time might

* *Arch. Biſhop. of Canterb. Epiſt. dedi.*

might improve that to as considerable a magnitude: Yea, further I believe, and Saint *Jerome* implies little less, *Ep.* 50. *ad Pamach. Com.* 2. *p.* 136. that in the general the Fathers when they were in the Lists, held it no matter of conscience, either to affirm for the Churches receptions, some things that they did not think to be so, yea, contrary to their knowledge; and to reject others that at another time they would have admitted, so it were conducible to their Victory: And although this be a greater, as being a more wilfull unfaithfulness then any other that I have remark'd in them; yet neither for this nor the rest, dare I brand them with those heavie imputations which you seem jealous that I tend to: But since I finde that those reverend and holy men do not stick to set the seal of tradition to conceits of their own, and other uncurrent doctrines, I do not fall presently, as you implie one must do of consequence, to lay to their charge impiety and profanation of the divinest Averments. But rather since they make so bold with that Seal, to believe that they did not repute it so sacred as you imagine, but farr inferior to proofs out of Scripture, and to be used freely as a *Topick* Argument only when they wanted demonstrations from thence; and indeed, throughout my slender reading, I have observed that when

they can produce the written word for their opinion, they do rarely insist upon prescription, as pleading Lawyers fly then to presidents chiefly when they want a text for their cause; But whereas you say, the foule play would not have scaped their numerous adversaries note, had they set the sacred Character to counterfeit Coine; I think so too. But what are we the wiser if their notes scape ours, as needs they must, since of the numerous writings of their numerous adversaries, this age I think hath scarce a number? The Governours of the Church in all times have made it one of their chief cares to smother their impious Libells, dictated, as Saint *Jerome* saies, by the spirit of the devill: And however some do alledge, that such suppressions make a cause suspected, for my part I think it (if not abused) both a wise and Religious course, since the scandal and weakning of the weakers faith, which are so many, is much more to be considered and regarded, then the satisfying of the curiosity of the learned, which are so few; it fares with *Sabellius*, with *Manicheus*, with *Porphyrie* and the rest of the Heretiques, or enemies of Christ, that live only in the works of their Antagonists, as with *Celsus* in *Origen*, and with *Arius* in *Athanasius*, and others whose confutations we are to thank; for all we know of their Arguments our Libraries

are

are just as well furntshed with them as you may imagine some good *Fraters* closet in *Spain*, that hath the Inquisitor for his neighbour, is with the works of *Calvin*, or *Luther*, or as the world is likely to be provided of those passages in the Fathers that make for them some ages hence, when time shall have worn out al Editions that are not according to the *Iudex expurgatorius*, of which those I mentioned in my former Letter, *Eusebius*, *Epiphanius* and Saint *Austin* have not mist their gentle wipe, though you say you have not met in either of them with any Article of Faith that you do not most intirely assent unto. For my part, I do not know what you understand by an Article of Faith; but I am sure I have cited out of St. *Austin* (*of the necessity of Childrens partaking of the Eucharist*) an Article in this discourse, which 'tis evident he held as an Article both of necessary faith and practice, wherein I believe you will refuse to joyne with him. As for *Epiphanius* his over-sights, I refer you only to the Jesuite *Petavius*, and for *Eusebius* to Cardinall *Perron*, who casts upon him a trifling aspersion but of Arrianism: or if his authority suffice not, let *Jerome* (*Ep. 65. ad Pamach. & Oc.*) be heard, who gives him this good Testimony, *Impietatis Arii apertissimus propugnator est.*

Now to your third and last ground, That

the traditions of the Church are infallible: I say, that in part we agree in this point; for I am perswaded that no man in his right wits will ever deny the firmest assent he hath about him to traditions of the nature which you Character doctrines taught by Christ to his Apostles, and by them preached through the world, and then again delivered to the ensuing ages by them that had these points inculcated in their hearts by the Apostles, and in this manner with care, and every where handed over frō age to age, which upon particular occasions the Fathers used to summe up and produce against innovators that would make breaches upon the ancient and generally received faith of the Church-Traditions of this nature: Doctrines thus delivered, I say, we agree to be derived from infallible Authority as well as the Scriptures; and it is indifferent unto me, whether I receive the waters of life from the Springs themselves, from the originall cisternes and conserves into which they did im:ediatly flow, or else conveied through Aquiducts at sixteen hundred years distance, so I be certain of the stanchnes and puritie of the pipes. That such traditions, and so exactly conveyed there are in the Church, and to which is due, as to the Scripture, from every prudent man (however a Sophister may cavill) the strongest assent of his soule; we likewise

wiſe both agree, ſuch are thoſe fore-named grand fundamentals of Chriſtianity; we agree further, that by tradition we are (as you ſay) plainly, fully, and practifically taught how to underſtand Scripture, I mean, in thoſe Fundamentals And much more muſt I agree with you, that the buſineſs and errand of Tradition is to deliver it ſo unto us, ſince for my part I hold, that thoſe dignifying circumſtances (by which tradition may rightly pretend to be infallible) belong onely to ſuch doctrines as are either plainly, or by neceſſary conſequences deducibly coucht in Scripture: in regard of which deductions we agree further, that it cannot be denied, but that it is (as you ſay) an eaſier and better rule to guide our underſtandings in the affairs of Religion, to uſe the help of ſuch Traditions, then to reſo: for that end unto Scriptures alone: as to read a Book wherein there are difficulties, with a judicious comment, is likely to be more profitable, then onely to peruſe the ſingle Text. And this laſt I aſſent unto, without admitting of the ſuppoſition upon which you inferre it, to wit, that there can by tradition be had a compleat knowledge of all that Chriſt taught. All this we are of accord in; but what can you infer from hence to the advantage of the *Romiſh* cauſe, ſince I peremptorily denie that there is ſuch a qualified Tradition really belonging to

any Tenent of the Church of *Rome* disapproved by us, or that seal with those quarterings and dignifyings wherewith you blazon it, set by any of the primitive Fathers (which yet were no sufficient warrant) to any doctrine that doth so much as border upon our disputes; since then I am sure you directed that part of your Letter to the same purpose with the rest, I must answer what I conceive it tends to, as well as what directly your words beare. And as I have profest wherein we agree; so now I must set down in what and why we differ. Concerning these particulars of tradition and Scripture, there are two principall points wherein I dissent from you: First, that in the general you conceive all Traditions of the Church (whatsoever) infallible. Secondly, that you hold the Scripture to be no compleat body of Faith, and therefore that we are to give tradition much the preheminency in governing the tenour of ours. For the first, namely, that all the Traditions of the Church are infallible, I could by one demand (of which is that Church whose traditions are infallible) either bring you to our confession that the true Church is to be known meerly by its conformity to Scripture in belief and practice, or else into a circle whilst you are forc'd to prove the truth and infallibility of the Church, by her constant reception of those true and infallible

fallible traditions, whoſe truth and infallibility you are at the ſame time proving by the Churches conſtant receiving them. But I paſs it by, becauſe I would not ſeeme to argue in any wiſe captiouſly; and alſo for that Mr. *Chillingworth* hath already excellently laid open all the intricaſies of this labyrinth. And therefore taking the preſent *Romiſh* Church for that you mean, I proceed to anſwer your Arguments, whereby in your Letter to the Vicounteſs of *P.* to which you referre me, you endeavour to prove all doctrines of the Church received or delivered by way of tradition, infallible: the chief that I finde are in the 12 and 13 concluſions as you call them, of that treatiſe; where firſt, for proof of your aſſertions, that no falſe doctrine of faith whatſoever can be admitted or creep into the Catholick Church; you ſay that whatſoever the preſent Church beleeveth as a propoſition of faith, is upon this ground, That Chriſt taught it as ſuch unto the Church he planted himſelf; a ſpecial good ground, and that will ſoon end all controvercies in this matter, if the ground appear to be well grounded; and that the Church of *Rome*, which you ſuppoſe the preſent Catholick, do never admit any doctrine of Faith but upon that ground. But firſt, the ground can never be made good, that whatſoever of Faith the Church of *Rome* teacheth

was *ab initio* ſo taught by Chriſt himſelf. And ſecondly, I beleeve that the Church of *Rome* her ſelf doth not alwayes in all that ſhe teaches for a tradition of Faith, ſuppoſe that Chriſt himſelf did teach the ſame; for this latter part, I am better perſwaded of the modeſtie of the Church of *Rome*, then to think that ſhe will ſo much as pretend it, for all her doctrines, as for example, that of communicating onely in the bread, is a tradition, for you will not I ſuppoſe vouch Scripture for it, unleſs you mean to apply to it Chriſt's prayer that the Cup might be removed; it is a tradition of Faith, yea, and I think I may ſay of neceſſary faith; for unleſs the Communicants beleeve their partaking ſufficient, it muſt needs make that great Sacrament of the Church ineffectual; and yet I do not think that the Church of *Rome*, or ſcarce any Jeſuite for her, will have the confidence to pretend that Chriſt himſelf taught the mutilation, or the belief of one Elements ſufficiencie, ſince the contrary practice and belief is ſo evident for many ages after Chriſt; and it is ſo eaſie to diſcover the very drie root it ſelf, of the cuſtom to with-hold the cup from the people; The like may be ſaid of other doctrines: Now for proof of the ground it ſelf, that all doctrines of Faith whatſoever admitted in the preſent Church, were ſo taught by Chriſt to

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the Church which he planted himſelfe; you alledge this Argument: The Reaſon why the preſent Church believeth any propoſition to be of Faith, is, becauſe the immediate preceding Church of the Age before, delivered it unto her for ſuch, and ſo you may drive it on (ſay you) from age to age untill you come to the Apoſtles and Chriſt: an eaſie progreſſe; and which, if you remember, Mr. *White* much inſiſted upon at that time when Mr. *Chillingworth* did me the favour to give him a meeting for conference at your lodging: although I ſet a great value upon that Gentlemans learning and faire way of diſputation; yet I confeſſe his argument hath often made me ſmile; it did ſo bring into my head that gallant conſequence of *Charles Thynnes*, wherewithall you once made me very merry, by which he undertook to demonſtrate, that ſurely in the world there might be a man ſo diſpoſed as (having a good riſe, and with a convenient career) to leap at once from *England* to *Rome*; for (ſaid he) Bring me the beſt Jumper you know, and is it not likely that there may be another that you know not, ſo active as to outjump him a foot; let him be brought, I hope you will not deny but he may be out-jumpt an inch: & ſo by inches & ſtraws-bredths of outleaping one another, why not to a thouſand miles? I dare ſay, that Mr. *Hooper* was better

ſatisfied

ſatisfied of the corruption of times in his pedigree from King *Peppin*, then I was by that Logick of the incorruption of times in his deduction of all Romiſh Doctrines from Chriſt; nor am I yet better ſatisfied, though I confeſs by your dwelling on the ſame Argument, I ſee plainly, that what may be liable to much ſlighting, propoſed by one man, may be delivered with ſuch weight and authority from another, as though it convince not, yet to require a ſerious pondering and diſcuſſion; the ſcope of your reaſoning, as I underſtand it, is this deduction *ad Impoſſibile*: If the preſent Church (ſay you) hold a Doctrine of Tradition, it is becauſe all they of the precedent ſo held it and delivered it; and the reaſon of the preceding Churches holding it ſo, is the ſame relative to all thoſe of the next before, and ſo on till you come to the firſt age of the Church: Now this being ſo, there cannot be admitted (ſay you) unto the avowed channell of the Church, any corrupt Rivulet of erroneous Doctrine, unleſs all they of one age conſpire in an untruth to deceive poſterity, which is impoſſible. This latter Aſſertion, which I muſt confeſs to be ſtrangely jarring to my ſenſe, is built upon a ſuppoſition of the former, which is it ſelf of great ambiguity: for, beſides that as I ſaid formerly, I doe not think but that the Church of *Rome* doth receive ſome unwritten

doctrines

doctrines for which ſhe dares not pretend to ſo ancient a pedigree, as to have been handed down to her from the primitive Church that Chriſt himſelfe hath planted; I would fain know when the preſent Church, as you ſay, holds a thing for ſuch, becauſe (*All they*) of the precedent age in Chriſts Church, delivered it to them for ſuch, what is underſtood by your (*All they*) of the Catholicke Church in the age precedent; by (*All they*) cannot be intended here, what you ſay in your eleventh concluſion, namely, that you mean the whole Congregation of the faithfull, ſpred throughout the whole World; for it is a farre more evident impoſſibility, then what you drive unto, that the whole congregation of the faithfull throughout the World in one age, ſhould confer with and teach the whole congregation of the Faithfull throughout the world in another: If it be underſtood by (*All they*) all the Doctors and Governors of one age, to all the faithfull throughout the whole World of another; I think you will finde that likewiſe to border upon impoſſibility.

By *All they* then, as I conceive, muſt be underſtood all the Doctors and Governors of the Church in one age, to all the Doctors and Governors of the Church in another; and from them the Doctrines ſpred among the whole multitudes of the Faithfull, are ſaid to be the

traditions

traditions of the Catholick Church: Now this is so narrow a confinement of universallity to the mouthes of the Doctors or Governors of a present Church, that I think it no impossibility for all those who have declared themselves in some point, in some age, to have agreed together on the teaching of somewhat more then was true, or at least such a major part of them, as the dissentors may well have bin over-born or suppreſt, so that the doctrine may with a succeeding Age, have past for a tradition generally agreed on; and to such a conspiracy, methinkes, they might have been drawn by appearances of good, as well as through ill ends: As for Example, the Doctors conceiving that a great restraint might be laid upon ill-livers by Auricular confession (the apprehension of a sensible witnesse being most lively unto them) might have complotted to teach the necessity of it to the multitude for an universall tradition, which perhaps they knew not to have been such: and so in other points, as the good or danger might appeare more or lesse to the Governors of the Church: so likewise for worse ends, in point of the Popes Supremacy, it being a Doctrine so essentiall to the Monarchy of the Church; I believe it far from impossible, that in some age all the Doctors of the Church of *Rome*, that shall be heard, may resolve to teach

teach it to their ſeverall Congregations, for univerſall tradition, ſince the major part, as a Pope (*Æneas Sylvius*) himſelf confeſſeth, affirms that the Pope is above Councels; becauſe he hath ſo many Biſhoprickes to beſtow, the Councels have none; beſides, if your (all they) of a precedent Church of Chriſt, inſtructing the preſent, be reduced to ſo few as the Doctors, that are heard deliver their mindes in any one Age, The naturall Argument by which you would prove the impoſſibility of a conſpiracy in an untruth, will fall to the ground, ſince that is built upon a ſuppoſition, that thoſe generall traditions which cannot be erroneous, becauſe of humane natures, love of truth are delivered by ſuch a multitude of men as contain in them all the variety of diſpoſitions and affections incident to the nature of man, which I doubt much whether it can truly be affirmed of all the Chriſtians of the world: I am ſure it cannot of the poor number of Doctors and Governors in any one age among them: But to let this ſuppoſition paſſe, ſuppoſing that the preſent Church underſtands what is meant by (All they) of the preceding, though I do not; and that all the preſent receives, ſhe receives as delivered to her by all thoſe of the preceding Age: let us examine a little that which you inferre upon it, to wit, that this being ſo, no falſe propoſition

of

of faith, nay (as you say afterwards) no false doctrine whatsoever can be admitted into the Church in any age, unless they of that age do unanimously conspire to deceive their children and yongers, in telling them they were taught by their Fathers, what indeed they were not; That this is not impossible, since only the Doctors & Pastors of the Church are to be understood by (*All they*) hath been already shown: But is there no other way, say you, but this for falshood to creep into the Church? Truely (me-thinks) on the contrary it is with error and necessary truths in the body Ecclesiastick, as with life and death in the body natural; And as there is onely one way for life to enter at, but a thousand gates for death, so for necessary truths there is but one ordinary avenne to the Church, namely by Scripture read or taught, but for error to get in at a thousand passages, without supposing such a general conspiracie: For though many times when an error hath had a long Current, we cannot point directly at the spring, yet are we ne're a whit less certane that it had an entrance, because we know not at which doore; *Nilus* hath a head, though *Geographers* cannot say directly where it is: And lines many times that at first appear parallels to the eie, by that time they have been lengthned a great while, prove apparently uneven, though

though no man can assigne the point whereat the deflexion began. The doctrine of the *Chilialists*, a Doctrine which if any other, surely that may well be said to have been a generally received Tenent of the Church Universall for some ages, since in the whole Church for above 250. years after Christ, there appeares not in that point one dissenting vote, till *Dionysius* of *Alexnadrida* oppos'd it; An error 'tis true, and yet I hope you will not be so uncharitable, as to accuse all the ancient Fathers of the second Century that they complotted to deceive posterity by teaching them a falshood for Apostolick Tradition; you are more favourable to them then so, in the last part of the Letter, where you your self discover a way how without conspiracy, this error, and so another, may have overspread the Church by the Autority of one man delivering it for a whisper of the Apostles: And truly Cousin, what ever else may bee said more probable in the particular, I am confident 'tis most true in the generall, that the work is easie from one man of credits Asseveration, to possesse vaste multitudes with firm perswasions of a falshood; and more in matters of Religion then in Civill things, since in those this *pium credere* prevailes much; and most will rather take upon trust what many affirm, and they discern no ill in, then put themselves to the oft-times endless

endleſſe troubles of examining; Credulity being ſo eaſie and naturall, Diſproving ſo difficult.

I warrant you the common faith of *Romulus* Aſcent into Heaven, would have had upon your grounds, as rationall aſſertors in the State of *Rome*, as any tradition by us queſtioned at this day in the Sea of *Rome*: See in that politique invention of *Julius Proclus*, what power the imagined piety of one man hath to make a fiction paſſe for an Epidemical verity, which as *Tertullian* ſayes, *Apol. cap. 8. Ab uno aliquando principe exorta, exinde in traduces linguarum, & aurium ſerpat, & ita modici ſeminis vitium, cætera rumoris obſcurat, ut nemo recogitet num primum illud os mendacium ſeminaverit.*

The Jewes, a much more numerous multitude heretofore, and ſtill I think equal in number to any Chriſtian Church of one denomination, were the moſt religious, the moſt ſcrupulous conſervators of unwritten truths in their *Cabala*. And yet what an error poſſeſſes the whole Nation, and did ſo long before the curſe fell upon them, concerning their Meſſias; whoſe comming long before Chriſt, and ſince, they all expected, and do expect in a temporall kingdome, of which they did derive, and doe continue to poſterity the hopes by Univerſall tradition; or if you will ſay that

they

they build the doctrine; not upon tradition but Scripture; yet I am ſure you cannot denie but that they continue the interpretation of Scripture that way by tradition, which comes all to one.

Did you grant the poſſibility of a Multitudes Conſpiracie, I am ſure you would denie it in this; which is confeſtly the point upon which all of them agree; that their ſupreme felicitie depended.

It would paſſe for a very fallacious reaſoning to drive up this belief of the Patriarkes; and ſo conclude it infallible, tbecauſe the preſent age received it for a tradition from the preceding; and that from the *Antepennltime* and ſo forward: Or becauſe the inſtant where the error was admitted amongſt them cannot *Digito monſtrari & dicier hic eſt.* For truly Coulin, partly through a natural deſire in all men, that others ſhould think as they do; or do what they think convenient (from whence there ſprings an aptneſs in the teachers, to applie to their opinions the ſtrongeſt Authorities they can deviſe, whether they do juſtly belong unto them or no) and partly through an aptneſs of the ignorant (which are the greateſt part of Auditours) to ſwallow more, and retain better the words, and the outward literal part of what is taught them; then either to examine or hold faſt the pre-

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cise and inward sense; It may well happen that multitudes may mumble the shell, when a few have the kernell; and looking superficially only upon the outward stamp, toss up and down for currant among them counterfeit oft-times and adulterate Coine; The mistake is ordinary, and the propagation of the error easie; for instance sake, in the doctrine of praying for the dead, many of the Doctors of the Church, who believed that all the souls of the departed were kept in certain receptacles untill the general resurrection, conceiving that prayer for the beatitude of the dead came all to one with praying for the hastening of Christs Kingdome, might teach it others, thinking it no prophanation of prayer to imploy that holy Act even where we know it cannot availe, since Christ himself Prayed to have the bitter Cup of his passion removed; and all the Doctors generally holding such prayers a convenient testimony of charity in the living, whether they were Commemorative, Eucharisticall, or Supplicatorie, easily might the practice pass into a common doctrine.

Now the word Necessarie being often used for Convenient (as it had need) since under a less pretension then Necessarie, it is hard imposing new duties upon the multitude; And the step being so easie, though so great

from

from neceſſary to abſolutely neceſſary, 'tis no marvaile that all or moſt of the Paſtors ſhould have delivered it for ſuch to their Flockes, and applied to it the Seale of moſt Authority with the multitudes Tradition; and ſo they have ſwallowed that according to the expreſſion of a neceſſary dutie, and given it the generall voague of ſuch in the Church, which was farre from being truly ſo in its firſt, and after ſo long a progreſs untraceable originas.

So likewiſe of Chriſts deſcent into Hell, concerning which I ſuppoſe all antiquitie agrees in the ſhell of the Article, *Deſcendit ad Inferos* (though *Ruffinus* [*in Symb.*] ſays it was left out of the Symbole of the Church of *Rome*) few of the Fathers in the kernell, or inward ſenſe, that is, what was underſtood by *Inferi*, and how, and why Chriſt diſcended thither. Some take the *Inferi* to be a part of Hel, others underſtand it with a little more colour of reaſon, that reſting place called *Abrahams Boſome*, and a part of Heaven. Some thinking, and rightly, as I conceive, that he deſcended virtually onely to triumph over the damned. Others, that locally, yea ſo farre as to preach in hell, and convert there; ſuch was the extravagant opinion of *Clemens* of *Alexandria* [*Strom. lib.* 5. *p.* 639.], one of the learnedeſt of the pack, but all agreeing I ſay, in

this outside, *Descendit ad Inferos*, or εἰς ᾅδην. No marvell that the more grosse and literall sense should be swallowed by the multitude, and gain the name (though an errour) of common reception, handed to them from their Forefathers: so that it may be collected out of what hath been said, that falshoods may creep into the Church either by want of exact fidelity in the teachers (which want may be generall when the collaterall considerations are generall, and the poynts themselves not thought so important as others they serve to:) Or by the frequent misapprehension of the teached, the matter often taking possession of them, when the manner of the doctrine usually most considerable, is either let slip or supplanted, or else by leisurable, yea and at first insensible mistakes either in Teachers or Learners, which notwithstanding in long progress of time grow manifest and vast, like the ebbings and flowings of the Sea, which at the end of some hours make so great a difference, when at the brink no man can perceive how much ground each wave doth gaine or lose: What then shall those discern that look upon the several billows at a remote and dazzeling distance? Nor can your arguments taken from humane Natures prime appetency of Truth, serve to conclude an infallibility in whatsoever shal be imbrac'd for a truth by a vast multitude

of

of men of variety of natures, diſpoſitions and intereſts.

Firſt, becauſe no number whatſoever of Individuals, but that which makes up the univerſall, can be conſidered as other then a part, whereas your argument is not colourably applied to leſs then the whole. It is the infruſtrable appetency of truth (an appropriate of humane nature in the general) that you inſiſt upon, which is not made vain by any multitudes (which how great ſoever is ſtill but a part) entertaining of a falſhood.

Secondly, becauſe if we admit of your Argument, it will conclude for Heretickes once grown numerous as the *Arrians* were, as well as for the beſt Catholickes, ſince natural Appetencies are not to be ſuppos'd more fruſtrate in the one then in the other: * *An boni noſtri qualitas ex populi potius pendebit erroribus quam ex conſcientia noſtra & judicio Dei.*

* *Lactantius Divin. Inſt. lib. 5. cap. 13.*

Thirdly, becauſe though I grant your Argument, I am never a whit the ſurer of truth, where I finde many profeſſors of a doctrine held as by tradition, ſince the prime naturall appetency of truth (whence you draw your ratiocination) is to the knowledge of truth, not the teaching of it. Now in our queſtion this is as much or more requiſite in the deliverers, then the other in the receivers, ſince they

look no further then the hands they had it from, and to hold fast in truth what they presented them for such, and for so conveyed by their preceders to them.

And lastly, your argumentation cannot be usefull, because you extend it only to prove that multitudes cannot agree together, on an untruth to complot it; whereas to overthrow your imagined infallibility, it is enough that they agree in, or to an untruth to believe it; Between which two there is so great a difference, that I think the first very improbable, the other very frequent: Nay further, I do conceive the very frequencie and (if I may so say) aptness in Individuals, whether few or many (which makes a multitude) to be led into errors, to result from mans natural affection to truth, which is such and so transporting, that we are glad to embrace and hug the very shadows of it; And being rarely able in our imperfect and depress condition here, to arrive to a solid enjoyment of that prime essence of Intellectual delight, we grow fond of the appearances, and cleave close to what is like it. Mans affection to this Transcendent, expressing it self after the same manner that it usually doth to the other prime fellow appetency of our Nature (good) which our soul here below, interially and naturally aims at in all its pursuances: But the onely

true

true good being too farre elevated for it to aſcend to a full enjoyment thereof, whilſt it beares the clogg of fleſh upon it, our ardor directs it ſelf to what we think of neareſt derivation from it. But alas, we miſs even of that, and embrace falſe ſhadowes for it, eaſily conceiting any thing the ſame that's but clad like unto what we love, whilſt almoſt all mankinde courts, purſues and enjoyes what's ill, yet ſeldome or never but *ſub ratione boni*. And thus by eaſily believing what we fain would have, by a naturall paſſion both to good and truth, we are betraid to a miſtaking credulity in both.

Thus Couſin, I have preſumed to give you an Anſwer in my immethodical and unpoliſht way, to what I finde repugnant to my underſtanding, in the diſcourſe to which you refer'd me for proofe of infallibility in all the Traditions of the Church of *Rome*. To diſcuſſe that learned and eloquent Diſcourſe throughout, in any correſpondency to its weight and beauty, belongs I confeſſe to farre greater eminence then I have vanity to aim at. And therefore what I have ventured upon, hath been onely to ſhew you, that although I am in the higheſt meaſure delighted, yea even raviſhed with that excellent piece, I am nothing apaid therewith in this particular; which may ſerve for an argument, that goodneſs many times

delights the ſoul in ſpite of truth, & ſo proves a tranſcendent above it. Now that the fallibility, and conſequently the inſufficiency of your rule of faith, tradition, hath been made appear, it will be fit to vindicate the ſufficiency of that rule which we relie upon. In which work the firſt hinderance that I meet with, is this objection of yours, That the particular books of Scripture were written for other particular ends, and not to give us a compleat body of faith.

To which I anſwer, that if by particular books of Scripture you underſtand each book a part, ſevered from its relation to the whole, I then agree with you, that every particular book was no more intended for a compleat body of Faith, then every particular Chapter for a compleat body of the book, or then a Window or a Door, to be a compleat body of a Houſe; but as the one was deſigned to give entrance, the other light to ſome room or paſſage of the Edifice; ſo the ſeveral books of Scripture were written, ſome to give entrance to Chriſtianity, ſome to illuſtrate dark places of the whole; ſome to inform us of matters of fact, that we might underſtand in what chiefly to praiſe God; ſome to diſcipline us in matters of practice, that we might know how aptlieſt to ſerve and pleaſe him: And others to inſtruct us in matter of belief, that we might

learn

learn to relie upon him. But on the other ſide, if you remit the leaſt of this abſtract and Independent conſideration of the particular books of Scripture: I muſt then profeſſe that I ſtedfaſtly believe that they were all deſigned to this chiefe and primary end of compoſing that compleat body of Faith, whereon Chriſts perfect Church ſhould be built as certainly as ſo many ſeverall parts of a building, having each a particular end, beſides of their erection, are yet in the generall and main intention all deſtin'd to the making up of one compleat and entire Fabrick; Yea further, (without urging the compariſon till it halt) I am perſwaded that as the Maſter Architect having an Idea form'd of the whole, directs many a part to the perfection of that, when the ſubordinate workman that frames it, thinks of nothing further then of the piece he is in hand with: So oftentimes the Almighty Architect when his Miniſters perhaps never look'd further then that ſervice in particular, wherein they were imployed, ſome perhaps in a Goſpel, in an Epiſtle ſome; he by his infinite Wiſdome directed each particular to the making up of the whole and compleat Body and Rule of Faith, the written Word; which by his admirable providence he hath, and will I am confident, ever preſerve intire and incorrupt in all parts neceſſary to its own perfection

and

and harmony; and to mans eternal ſafety and direction. Inſomuch, that I cannot but think it at the beſt loſs of time, to be ſolicious after any other rule; and irreverence if not impiety, to queſtion the ſufficiency of this. But becauſe my opinion is little conſiderable with one of ſo far a better Judgment, take in this Point the Opinion of the Fathers, which you ſo much relie upon. To begin with *Tertullian*, theſe are the laſt words of his 22. Chapter againſt *Hermogenes*, *Scriptum eſſe doceat* Hermogenis *officina*: If it be not written (ſaith he) let him fear the Woe deſtin'd ſo ſhuch as ſhall adde or take away. Can any thing be inferred more rightly then from this paſſage, the ſufficiency of Scripture, and the ſuperfluity of any other rule? But take yet ſomewhat more direct from † *Athanaſius*. The holy, and from God inſpired Scriptures (ſaith he) are αὐτάρκεις, of themſelves ſufficient to the diſcovery of truth, I appeal to St. *Baſil* himſelf, of all the Fathers the greateſt attributer to Tradition in all things wherein regard is juſtly due unto it. Hear what he ſayes, handling a point wherein Scripture (I think) is as dark as in any neceſſary one whatſoever; I mean that of the Trinity: Believe what's written, (ſaith * he) what is not written, ſeek not. And in another place, It

† *Oratio ad Gentiles*, towards the beginning.

* *Hom. 29. adverſ. Calumſtan. Trin. page* 623.

is a manifeſt falling from the Faith (ſayes † he) and an argument of Arrogance, either to reject any of thoſe things that are written, or to introduce any that are not of the written. And laſtly, to ſum up all that can be ſaid by a Proteſtant, in one ſentence of a Father of greateſt Learning and authority: Liſten but to St. *Auguſtine*, *De doctrina Chriſtiana lib. 2. cap. 9. In iis quæ apertè in Scriptura poſita ſunt, inveniuntur illa omnia quæ continent fidem moreſque vivendi.* He had need be a confident Sophiſter, that would undertake to evade theſe Authorities; but yet if they may not be admitted, let Scripture be heard for it ſelf: It is a priviledge and preeminence ſolely peculiar to that ſacred Volume to be Witneſs, Advocate and Judge in its own cauſe. Surly the Spirit ſpake in St. *Paul*, when he told *Timothy*, That holy Writ *was able to make him wiſe unto ſalvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. *in fine.* And when numbering up almoſt all the particular parts that can be required to the compleat Inſtitution of a Chriſtian, he concludes, that in theſe by Scripture the man of God *is made perfect, and fitted to every good work.* And I am confident by the ſame Spirit he ſpake his own minde, when he ſpake ours ſo directly to the *Corinthians*, *Ut diſcatis in nobis ſupra id quod ſcriptum eſt non ſapere*, *Epiſt.* 1. *cap.* 4.

† *De vera ac Pia fide, page* 251.

where

Where by the way it is to be noted, that the Apoſtle applies this doctrine as an Antidote to that very inconvenience which I have heard ſome Papiſts object againſt the reliance on the ſearch and uſe of Scripture, namely, that by it thoſe of greater capacity were likely to be blown up, and to glory in their clearer diſcerning over weaker, whereas the guidance of the Church and Tradition, was equaller to all. To this I ſay, 'tis worth obſerving what he deſires as it were by way of reaſon, for the contrary Doctrine, to wit, of confining our ſelves to Scripture, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὑπὲρ τὸν ἕνὸς φυσιοῦσθαι κατὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου.

I profeſſe Couſin, that theſe and many other paſſages of Scripture, which for brevities ſake I note only in the * Margent, pronounce to me in as cleare a ſenſe as may be, the ſufficiency of Scripture, and ſuperfluity of relying on tradition for a rule of Faith. And yet I, ſweare I am none of thoſe of whom St. *Baſil* ſpeaks, *p.* 621. πλεῖστοι τῶν παρόντων κατάσκοποι μᾶλλόν εἰσι κατάσκοποι τῶν λεγομένων ἢ μαθηταὶ τῶν δογμάτων.

* *Deut. cap.* 4. *& cap.* 12. *Epiſt. ad Gal. cap.* 1.

How they may ſound, or what other ſenſe they may bear to you I know not, ſince now adayes Gods Word proves to men of divers opinions, as the Apoſtles language, when the divided

divided tongues had ſat upon them in Doctor * *Alabaſters* conceit to ſeverall Nations at one and the ſame time, *Hebrew* to the *Jew*, pure *Greek* to the *Athenian*, and *Latin* to the *Roman*. Laſtly, if the Fathers Teſtimonies may not prevaile, they being of an uncertain Authority, nor Scripture ſway, as being of an uncertain ſence, let common reaſon be heard in the cauſe, which for as much as I can judge of, it is as ſtrong for the ſufficiencie of Scripture (that is, its containing all points neceſſarie to ſalvation) as any prudent man need require for warrant of his belief. It is agreed upon by all ſides, that Man being ordained to a ſupernatural end, nature is not ſufficient to lead him thither, but that he muſt have ſome meanes above it, and proportionate to the end, ſuch as may either ſhew him the way, if he can diſcern: or lead him in it if he be blind, or which is happieſt and ſureſt of all, both inſtruct and conduct him in it. This laſt kinde of guidance, it were preſumption for man to claim, however Gods grace may afford it unto ſome. The ſecond, it were ſtudipity for all to expect, however ſome have little hopes without it; And therfore it is the firſt that belongs to man in generall; that is a directory to all thoſe pathes and windings, without the knowledge

* Then was likewiſe the fantaſtique opinion of the Authour of the book *de Spiritu ſancto* fathered upon *Cyprian*

knowledge of which he cannot arrive to his primary end; And by the knowledge of which he may, and is responsible himself if he do not follow the direction; which if God should withhold from us, although I could not venture with some to apply to his Justice that of *Pharaoh's* requiring brick where he gives no straw, nor to pronounce it a stain to his goodnesse, should he condemn us for missing the way when he gaue us no Map of the Country, since to a life actually forfeited as all mans was in *Adam*, the least reprive is a grace; a grace to be let row in the Gallies, to him that the Gallowes expected; A grace to take out of the ditch, a man that put out his own eyes, though you leave him to grope out the rest of his journey with perpetuall hazards of falling in againe: I say, though I dare not in this case pronounce the with-holding a directory from us, inconsistent with his justice, wisdome or goodnesse; yet truly I think you will yeeld, the man hath not so fitting a belief of Gods mercy and wisdom as he ought, who conceives that he would suffer those to perish for want of such a necessary directory, for whose sake he gave up his own Son to death. Now to suppose such a directory from God, and to think it defective, is again to fall into undue thoughts, either of his mercy or of his power; nay, it is to destroy what

what you do ſuppoſe, ſince the omiſſion of any thing abſolutely neceſſary in a direction, makes the direction none.

This concluſion then I may ſafely draw, and I doubt not but with your conſent, that the Supernatural Directorie and rule whereby we are through Gods grace and mercy to be inſtructed in the way to our ſupernatural end, muſt needs be compleat and ſufficient in all parts abſolutely neceſſary to that end. It only remains then to ſhew which is that rule and directory ſufficient and compleat in all neceſſary parts: Now as in a journey, directions of the way, how ſufficient, how exact ſoever, will little advance you, unleſs you beleeve them, or the knowledge of the way, unleſs you have legs to go, or ſomewhat elſe to carry you: ſo in our Souls progreſs to beatitude, it muſt have reliance and its inſtruments of gradation too, which is Faith, the ſtrongeſt *vehiculum* of Humanity to Divinity.

Now as I ſaid before, that the means muſt be proportionate to the end, ſo it is certain that the way, & the Organs by which we move in it, muſt be proportionate one to another, or we ſhall never arrive at our end: As that let all other things be never ſo well fitted, yet if our way muſt be thorow the Air, or the Sea, good legs or directions will little avail us. The Organ then of our motion to Heaven being

Faith,

Faith, and that Faith the ſtrongeſt aſſent of our ſouls; the ground upon which it muſt march, ought to be no leſs ſolid then infallibility, ſince the ſtrongeſt Aſſent cannot be given but upon the ſtrongeſt Inducement: Foraſmuch then as particular Tradition, that is the unanimous teſtimony of any Church, of what numerous parts ſoever, hath been already concluded fallible; and univerſall Tradition is, as it were, coincident with Scripture, being onely (as *Clemens* ſayes, *Strom. lib. 6. p. 679.*) as it were, an unwritten Tranſcript of that in mens hearts, and gives atteſtation to no materiall Object of Faith, but what is deducible thence. It followes, That Scripture is the ground proportioned by unqueſtionable infallibility to faith, as correſpondent likewiſe in all things elſe, both to the goodnes of God that gives the directory, & to our neceſſities that are to follow it. The ſufficiency & perfection of Scripture having been ſhewed, & likewiſe the defectibility of that kinde of Tradition for whoſe authority you labour; The preferring of this latter before the firſt in governing the Tenure of our Faith, is of conſequence ſuch an error as I am ſorry ſhould be countenanced by your continuing in it. But becauſe the precedency which you give to the Churches Tradition before Scripture, is pretended due upon another ground alſo, which I have yet ſpoke little unto:

to:

to: give me leave to say somewhat to that. You lay Obscurity to the charge of Scripture; That Articles of Faith are not there so plainly expresst, that every body can understand them. If it were so, truely the Laytie of the Church of *Rome* is much obliged to it, for easing them of the trouble of reading what is unintelligible unto them; but little beholding unto S. *John*, for passing for a precept of Christ's, *Search the Scriptures*. But how shall they take it now, foraſmuch as the contrary to your Assertion, is a manifest Corellary to the proof of Scriptures sufficiencie and perfection? the compleatness of a Rule or Directory consisting as well in its Evidence, as its Fulness; and must need Interpretation as little as Addition. Yet let us grant your supposition a while. Scripture is obscure, you say. What follows? Tradition is to be preferred. Tradition then is easier; Tradition is clear, say you, to the Vulgar. I should rather think Tradition impossible to be learn'd, since Man can speak but with a few; and millions must make up that; unless you bring all lines that can be drawn from the Ciarumference, into a Centrical point, the Pope. But you are too much a friend to the Doctors of the *Sorbon*, to do that, Besides, if you do so, the difficulty will still remain: For here the Rule in Geometry will not hold. The lines drawn back from the Centre to the Circumference, are not equal. Men are not all at an equal distance

from him; all cannot hear him: How shall the Vulgar understand him? By their Ghostly Fathers? You will not attribute to private men a clearer, fuller, and evidenter capacity to instruct, then the whole Body of Scripture: Or if you do, What are Private Instructions of kin to Traditions?

Thomas of *Aquine* puts in this kinde, the highest complement upon Ideots towards the beginning of his first Book *adversus Gentiles*, by sinking down the learnedst to their level. For he teaches us, I remember, to this effect, That the wisest ought not to embrace by Natural Reason and Discourse any Article in Religion, were it as manifest as that the whole is bigger then the Part; since there may be one so ignorant,, as to have no notion of what the Whole is, or what the Part. And Religion, that imparts all alike, must be grounded (says he) upon some Principle common and equal to all. Herein the Doctor, I must needs say, is rightly Angelique: for he walks to me in the clouds. If he mean, by that Principle *Faith*, I understand not how that can be severed either from Reason and Discourse, of which it is the last result; or from Grace, which is not common. If he mean, by the Principle, that *Tradition of the Church* which you relie on, I know not how that can be an easie guidance to the Ignorant, since it is so difficult a matter to the wisest, to know which is the right Church,

whose

whose Traditions are so sacred: for unless that appear, neither the Ignorant, nor the Wise, are like to be much satisfied in conscience, by governing the tenour of their Faith according unto them. If we must judge of the Church by *Bellarmine*'s Marks, in what mis-mazes shall the ignorant be guided, whilst we finde the most knowing involved in such intricacies, in the examination of what is meant by Visibility, Succession, and Conformity with Antiquity; and to what Society of Christians those attributes belong. If you will have the true Church known by Scripture, which is surely the easiest and best course, (even in the opinion of many learned Papists) what is that but to flee back, and make Tradition clear and certain, by that Rule from which you flee, as from what you judge obscure to Tradition that you pretend to be evident? And then the Protestants will have reason to take it heavily, that they should be condemned for fonnding each part of their Religion upon the same ground whereon the Papists build all theirs at once: Yea great reason shall we have to resent it, unless a Patent be granted from God Almighty, declaring the Rule of Faith for such a Commodity as may be taken from Serpiture in gross, but not by retail.

Now that I have answered your Objections, I will not be nice in declaring unto you, to the full, my sence concerning the Sufficiencie and Perspicuity of Scripture.

I believe that those Canonical Books which God by his providence hath preserved unto these Times, and which are acknowledged by all Christians to have been Divinely dictated, do make up a compleat Body of all the material objects of Faith necessary to salvation; whether explicitely or implicitely to be believed.

I further believe, that in that blessed Sacrary there is not onely an inclusive sufficiencie, to wit, a perfect compriſal of all Saving Doctrines absolutely essential to Christianity; but an exclusive also, that is, such a sufficiencie as excludes and forbids any Doctrines should be imposed on Christians for a necessary Article of Faith, that is not recorded there. *Nobis curiositate opus non est post Christum Jesum, nec inquisitione post evangelium; cùm credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere: hoc enim prius credimus, non esse quod ultra credere debemus.* Tert. de prax. adverſ. Hæret. cap. 8.

And lastly, I believe that all points whatsoever of Christian Religion are there set down as perspicuously, and as clearly intelligible to all capacities, as they are clearly necessary to be believed by all: And that God's mercy in the merits of Christ, accepting alike the Faith resultant from the dark mists of the Ignorant, and from the clearest intelligence of the Learned.

The Lamb may wade to his bliss thorow the same water thorow which the Elephant may swim,

swim. *Quicquid est (mihi crede) in Scripturis illis, altum & divinum est in est; omnino veritas, & reficiendis instaurandisque animis accommodatissima disciplina, & plane ita modificata, ut nemo inde haurire non possit quod sibi satis est; si modo ad hauriendum devote & pie, ut vera Religio poscit, accedat.* Here is the saying of *Heraclitus* most truely applicable. Οἱ χρύσον διζήμενοι γῆν πολλὴν ὀρυστόουσι καὶ εὑρίσκουσιν, ὀλίγον δὲ χρυσοῦ ὄντος γένους τὸ συγγενὲς μετεκλεύοντες εὑρήσουσι τὸ πόλυ ἐν ὀλίγῳ.

Nor truely do I conceive (besides God's equalizing capacities by his own gracious acceptance) that there needs more then a very ordinary one, to understand the Scripture in all points absolutely necessary to salvation. Οὐκ ἀπεκρύβη τινὰς ὁλογὸς, φῶς ἐστι, κοινὸν ἐπιλαμποῦ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποῦ κιμμέριος ἐν λόγῳ.

It may be as well understood of the Word of God, as of God the Word, to whom *Clemens* (*pag. 56. advers. Gent.*) applies the saying. *Magnifice igitur & salubriter Spiritus sanctus ita scripturas sanctas modificavit, ut locis apertioribus famæ occurret, obscurioribus autem fastidia detergeret. Nihil enim fere de illis obscuritatibus eruitur, quod non planissimè dictum alibi reperiatur.* Aug. The great difficulties and obscurities which are there found, I understand chiefly to be in those less material points, wherein mens part-taking subtilties

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have given to God's Word many various acceptions, whilst not seeking the doctrine of Scripture, but those that themselves are imbued with in it, they use it not as the straight and stedfast Rule to judge of, and avoid Obliquity by, for which it was ordained, but rather as a *Lesbian* Rule, to be bent and reflected according to the several purposes of their own Architecture.

Verifying of the heavenly food of the soul, that fantastick imagination of *Israel*'s heavenly food of the body, Manna, which was said to have been to all differing palats the morsel that each one would have it, and the taste that his mouth was made to.

Since then I am thus perswaded, that God hath lodged within us a Pilot, Reason, how weak soever, yet proportionate to the Vessel and the Voyage; and that he hath likewise laid open before us a clear and faithful Card, that varies not for any Elevation, Scripture: you must pardon me, Cousin, if I chuse rather to steer by that Compass thorow the depths of Religion, to our Haven of rest and beatitude, then like those ancient Navigators that wanted a true Directory, to coast it from Doctors to Fathers, from Fathers to Popes, from Popes to Councels, and from all these to (but pretended unerring) Tradition. *Quare oportet ineare maxime, in qua vitæ ratio versatur, sibi quemque confidere suóque judicio ac propriis sensibus niti ad investigandam*

gandam & perpendendam Veritatem, quàm credentem alienis erroribus decipi, tanquam ipſum Rationis expertem. Dedit omnibus Deus pro virili portione ſapientivm, ut & inaudita inveſtigare poſſent, & audita perpendere: nec quia nos illi temporibus anteceſſerunt, ſapientia quoque anteceſſerunt, quæ ſi omnibus æqualiter datur, occupari ab antecedentibus non poteſt; ſed hoc eos fallit, quod majorum nomine poſito non putant fieri poſſe ut aut ipſi plus ſapiant, quia minores vocantur, aut illi diſſipuerint, quia majores nominantur. Lactan. Deome. Inſtitut. lib. 1. cap. 8.

And now (noble Couſin) that I have examined your Opinions, and diſcuſſed your Arguments, let me have your patience, or your pardon, a little further, while I give you an account concerning thoſe Directions wherewith you favour me in your Letter, and in what ſtate I am to follow ſome, and to excuſe my ſelf in others.

To the firſt, namely, the uſe which you conceive we are to make of reading of the Fathers, I willingly conform my ſelf in one part, that is, in letting paſs thoſe things which they write as Divines and Sholars onely, allowing them no more weight with me, then the reaſons wherewith they are accompanied do give them. I am likewiſe very willing to let paſs, for the moſt part, what they write as Commentors upon the Scri-

pture; their interpretations in that kinde being many times (if I may ſo ſay) very Chymerical. Although I muſt tell you, that were I perſwaded of any third Authority by whoſe ſeal the Fathers could tranſmit unto us, in all things of Religion, ſuch certain and unqueſtionable reſolutions as you imagine, I ſhould not expect their aid more earneſtly, nor take the omiſſion more unkindly of them in any thing, then in point of giving us the right and well-handed interpretations of Scriptures. I further obey you,, in laying hold and relying on what they teach us as Paſtors of the Church; relying (I ſay) upon that chiefly, to wit, in the great Fundamentals of Chriſtianity; but not generally, that is, not in thoſe Queſtions which we diſagree on; wherein they were neither willing nor able to be exact: and leaſt of all, when they enveigh againſt Hereticks; their paſſions and tranſportments being at ſuch times greateſt. As for ſuch Opinions as they deliver Dogmatically, without alleadging texts of Scripture or learned Arguments to maintain them; although they appear delivered with never ſo earneſt an intent, that they ſhould be taken as matters of Faith, you muſt pardon me if they ſink no deeper into my belief, then they are driven by ſuch Arguments as my own or others diſcourſe can finde for them, either in Reaſon, Scripture, or Univerſal Tradition.

Your ſecond advice is, that I ſhould apply my

care

care to collect thorowout the sence of the Fathers, and, by what they say, to frame to my self a Model of the Practice, Government, and Belief of the Church in their times; and then to tell you whether it be like to yours or ours. The Care and Attention you wisht me, I brought at first to the studie of the Fathers: but I cannot brag of the Model I have framed out of them; findimg that truly a work hard enough for the best Antiquary: And to me 'tis an improvement of the difficulty to an impossibility, to be put to tell you which of the present Churches hath most resemblance to that of their times: I could as easily resolve you which of two men that stood before me, were likest to a hundred differring faces. For I do not think there is a greater variety of countunances at a Publick Assembly, then there are differences in the several Ages wherein the Fathers lived, touching those three parts of Religion; especially these two, of Practice and Government; of which, *Tertullian*, having summ'd us all the chief particulars of the Creed, pronounces, *Hac lege fidei manente, cætera jam disciplinæ & conversationis admittunt novitatem correctionis.* Tert. de Virg. Velan. cap. 1. For matters of Practice, 'tis a clear case, what liberty was taken to varie them according to several evasions and ends, since some of the Apostles themselves you know, did not stick to practice Circumcision: nor do the

severall

ſeveral ages appear to me ere a whit the more exquiſite, in the imitation of their fore-fathers, then you will ſay the Church of *Rome* is at this day of the Apoſtles in that, amd of thoſe that followed after in adminiſtring the Euchariſt to children, and yet 'tis ſhe that pretends to be the Pantomime of antiquitie for matters og Government, how *Camelion*-like that hath been, how various, is as viſible as green, and he that would redue the Church now to the form of Government in the moſt primitive times, ſhould not take in my opinion, the beſt noe wiſeſt courſe, I am ſure not the ſafeſt, for he would be found pecking toward tee Presbytery of *Scotland*, which for my part, I beleeve in point of Government, hath a greater reſemblance then either yours or ours, to the firſt age of Chriſts Church, and yet is neer a whit the better for it, ſince it was a form not choſen for the beſt, but impoſed by adverſitie and oppreſſion, which in the beginning forc'd the Chnrch faom what it wiſht, to what it might, not ſuffering that dignity and ſtate Eccleſiaſticall, which rightly belong'd unto it, to manifeſt it ſelf to the word; and which ſoon afterwards upon the leaſt *lucida intervalla*, ſhown forth ſo gloriouſly in the happier, as well as more Monarchicall condition of Epiſcopacy; of which way of Government I am ſo well perſwaded, that I think it pittie 'twas not made betimes an article of the

Scottiſh

Scotiſh Chatechiſm, that Biſhops are *jure divino*. But as it is a true maxime in nature, *Corruptio optimi peſſima*, ſo it holds likewiſe in Government, both civil and Eccleſiaſtical. The beſt of all, Monarchy, feſters oft-times and ſwels into the worſt of all, Tyrannie. To which after the firſt 500. years, Policy having or'etopt Pietie, the Church made a haſtie progreſs; and of the following ages in this particular, I grant the preſent Church of *Rome* to be a copy farr exceeding the originall, verifying now of the *Roman*, the imputation that *Ariſtides* layd by way of reproach upon al other Empires; Τὰς μὲν διεφθαρμένας ὡς δοῦλας ὑφέωρων, τὰς δὲ ἐλευθέρας ὡς ἐχθρὰς ἐκολάζον· for matters of belief, the ſalvation of Chriſtians depending chiefly upon them, 'tis true, in the primary and fundamental articles, they have been more conſtant, unanimous, and exact; and in thoſe comparing the Church of their times with yours and ours; I think I may pronounce them all three alike to one another; but in points leſs material, ſuch as I eſteem thoſe wherein we two differ; I ſhould contradict my ſelf to undertake the framing out of the Fathers a certain judgement, which of the two preſent Churches were moſt coreſpondent to that of their times. Notwithſtanding, if you command me to ſay for which ſide in my gueſs the Fathers do make moſt, I will tell you truely and freely what I think, holding then the ballance

as even as I can, I conceive the Fathers in some few points, do lean somewhat more to you, as in that of Christs descent into hell, and also in that of free-will: (those excepted that wrote in heat against *Pelagius*) but in other differences, and those of greater importance, I collect, and probably, if I am not much deceived, that their sense is much clearer for us, as in the doctrines of Purgatory, and of the Eucharist; for as touching the first, although you may pretend in some that the words and outward shell, wherein the Fathers opinion were conveyed, belong more to you; yet if the matter be carefully pick'd and examined, I doubt not but the sense and kernel will prove ours; and it will be found that when ever any of the Fathers, *Origen* onely excepted, and his adherents, who held the very flames of Hell but Purgatory and Temporal; I say, those set aside, all the Expressions of the Fathers this way appear clearly to me to have been understood, not of a Purgatory, but onely of a Probatory fire, whether they meant that of affliction, or that of the day of Judgement; as for that place in St. *Augustine* formerly alledged for Purgatory, his best commentator *Lod. Vives*, confesses he could never meet with it in the ancienter copies of that Fathers admirable works, however crept into the vulgar Editions.

In

In point of the Eucharist, I believe my former instances will deserve a confession of the ballances being so equally poysed in this affaire, as far forth as expression at least, that the overbearances of either scale is hardly perceptible: but did I grant that their words weighed incomparably more on your side, yet I should not doubt to challenge their sense for us, and that most confidently upon this reason; That supposing the Fathers to have believed as we do, the Sacrament to be Bread, great reason might they have notwithstanding, to raise the majesty of it in their expressions, and to term it the body of Christ, it being usuall, and thought necessary in the primitive times to wrap up the Sacraments of the Church in mysteries, that the Catechumens might be possest with a more awfull reverence towards them, and be whetted and fan'd as it were to a more keen and ardent desire of being admitted unto them; especially the danger being much more easie for them to think too meanly of what bore the name of Christs body, but was palpably bread, then that they should fall to adore that for God, which their eare onely told them was the flesh of Christ, and all their other senses assured them to be the commonest food of mankind; whereas supposing them to have believed as the Church

of

of *Rome* doth, that the Sacrament is the very Fleſh and Blood of our Saviour, and to be received with the ſame reverence that belongs to God himſelf; there can be no warrantable reaſon why they ſhould at any time leſſen the majeſty of ſo ſacred an object of our adoration, or give it ſo often the name of thoſe ordinary elements, whoſe evidence to our ſenſe ſhould they alwayes have ſaid all they could invent of dignifying, would ſtill have been apt enough to give an allay to the faith and veneration that's pretended to.

Theſe being as I conceive, two of the moſt important Articles of difference between your Church and ours, what hath been ſaid will ſuffice to manifeſt unto you, that thorowout this diſcourſe I decline not the tryal by the Fathers out of any diſtruſt of our cauſe: for truly though I will not allow their Writings to be the proper tribunal at which our controverſies are to be judged, I ſhould be content to referre with you the whole matter to their arbitration, and voluntarily to allow them that determinating power which in right they cannot claime; ſo farre am I from acknowledging a greater conformity in the Church of *Rome* then in ours to what they teach to have been either the Government, Practice, or Belief of the primitive times, nor yet ſhould I refuſe them for Arbitrators as peremptorily

rily as I doe for Judges. I would not think my pains loſt, or ſtudy of the Fathers not worth the while: For beſides the adddition of knowledge and general improvement of the Soul, which one muſt be a very ſtupid Reader of the Fathers, not to advance in, by the helps of their great and univerſal learning, beſides the admirable excitations to piety and zeale; I conceive that even in the affair of directing us to a ſoul-ſaving Religion, a Chriſtian by ſearching into their ancient memorials may as you ſay, reap a far greater advantage, then either Criticks or Lawyers do in their ſeveral Sciences from their worm-eaten monuments of Antiquity; for they, Couſin, from their maimed evidences of broken and disjoynted Recors, draw out Principles, it is true, ſo probable, as may prudentially induce a rational and equal Surveyors aſſent, from which they frame perhaps ſome ſuch text, whereby indifferent men do conſent to be regulated; but we by our holy ſearch into the Sacraries of former ages are led to a text already divinely framed; A text perfectly comprizing all parts requiſite to the ſupreme Science it concerns; A text whoſe very affirmation is na uncontroulable reſolution; from our Records of antiquity, we draw not only Topical Arguments, but proofs to any diſcourſing man above demonſtration; ſuch as

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it were madneſs and impiety to reject upon any argument to the contrary; and this in all points of Religion; miſtake me not; I meane that do really and confeſtly on all hands import Heaven or Hell in mens beliefs and practiſes: and from hence, though I ſhould deny the Fathers any uſefulneſs at all in our controverſies, yet I ſhould extreamly gratulate to My ſelf the labour and ambition to be in ſome good meaſure skill'd in their Antiquities, and to you your great and (according to your Principles) moſt judious progreſſe in them.

Your next advice is, that I ſhould apply my underſtanding and induſtry to build up as well as to pull down: and to examine as ſtrictly the reaſons of my own belief, to ſee whether that be well grounded; as thoſe for the contrary opinion, to obſerve whether that be concludingly demonſtrated; I muſt confeſs, I ever thought it a ſuperfluous labour, to ſeek to eſtabliſh one part of a contradiction, by any further proof then the deſtruction of the other; and you your ſelf ſuppoſing our Tenents contradictory, do warrant that for a truth, (to me) ſufficiently proved, and preſs on me a neceſſity of imbracing whatſoever is contradictory to a falſhood.

'Tis true that Saint *Jerome* paſſes upon *Lactantius*, a cenſure in a wiſh; *Utinam tam noſtra*

noſtra confirmare potuiſſet quam facile alie-na deſtruxit; but his caſe and ours are not a-like, 'twas not ſo convincing an Argument; *Paganiſm* is ridiculous, *Judaiſm* exolete; Therefore Chriſtians are in every thing in the right, as 'tis with us; the Church and tradition is not infallible in all things, therefore fallible in ſome; the bread is not tranſubſtantiated, therefore it remaines bread. There is no third place for us after death, beſides heaven and hell; and no fall from the one, and no redemption from the other; therefore no Purgatorie; In theſe and the like caſes, one partie is ſure and firm ſetled when ever the other falls, as certainly as in natnrall generation, the decay of one thing is infallibly the parent of another: And therefore in point of wrong and unfitting ſuperſtructures, ſuch as moſt of the *Romiſh* Tenents are, which we lay battery to, it may ſuffice to pull down; thoſe being demoliſht, what's rightly built will ſtand faſt of it ſelf, ſince both ſuppoſe a foundation.

Now for the ſecond part of your direction, namely, that I ſhould directly examin the reaſon of my own belief, I haye obeyed you to the full; And that you may be able to judge whether they be well weighed or no, take here a ſum of my belief; I believe the unity and Omnipotency of God, and an inexplicable Tri-

nity in that unity; I beleeve the incarnation of the second person of that Trinity, that's Gods assumption of perfect humanity from the womb of a Virgin; And that he humbled himself, not onely to manhood, but also to mortality; that after he had set our practice an exact patern by his life, and by his words imbued our Theory with all necessary documents, he might purge our staines with his blood, redeem our forfeitures by the price of his passion, and present a plenary satisfaction to his Fathers Justice for all our misdeeds; I believe further, that to make us capable of the effects of his merits, Beatitude, he illuminates our understanding by the gift of the holy Ghost, by whom is created in us that divine faith, by which these mysteries are to be apprehended: I beleeve also, that our blessed Saviour gave his Apostles Commission to preach to all the world his saving Doctrine, who did accordingly, and have left to posterity, both written Records, and living ones in successions of the faithfull, that shall preserve even to the end of the world, these and all other articles necessary to salvation. I likewise beleeve that the Apostles established Pastors in several Churches, whom we are to hearken unto with reverence, and to receive of them the Sacraments of regeneration to Christ, and of Communion with him, both

which

which by Gods grace, have a divine and ſupernatural effect in the clenſing us from ſin; I beleeve that Heaven ſhall be the Reward of the good, and hell of the wicked: and laſtly in a word (to ſupply whatſoever may have been omitted) I firmly beleeve whatſoever is evidently contained in the Creed or Scripture, or clearly deducible from either. I am perſwaded that you will yeild that the reaſons upon which theſe are built, will abide the ſtricteſt examination: None of theſe aſſertions I hope betrayeth its own weakneſs And yet theſe are the only opinions which I have been imbued with; theſe are the parts of faith that integrate my Religion; in theſe are compriſed al points that I think neceſſary to be believed; And he that believes any thing more, if he have but his ſhare of good works, is ſafe in my opinion; for he hath faith of ſupererogation; my firm and reſolute ſettlement in theſe verities, defends me from being at all concerned in thoſe ſeverall imputations which towards the cloſe of your Letter you do moſt judiciouſly and juſtly lay upon Sciolous and Scepticall wits, that floating in uncertainty, would fain reduce every thing to that paſs, ſeeking rather to puzzle and imbroil an adverſarie, then weightily to eſtabliſh a ſolid truth. 'Tis that ſolid truth, and ſuch as bears no diſpute, that I wiſh we might all ſtick to; and let paſs thoſe

quilsets, and niceties imposed by the Church of *Rome*, for Articles of importance, and which her adherents dwell upon with too scrupulous a diligence; such as admit arguments on both sides, and are fitter for a declamation then a Catechism, in which whilst men vainly busie themselves, they let slide away many times unnoted, as you say, that great deal which is uncontroulable and plain points, which can be thought at best but at the skirts, none belonging to the main body of Religion; doctrins for the most part (at the least in my judgement) so little material; that I applaude the Fathers for spending so little time or labour on them; such, as I am so far from delighting to make objections in, that where ever I have touch'd upon particulars, it hath bin a *Contre-cœur*, and only to disperse such dust as others raise; for I sweare there is no man living hath a stronger aversion then my self from all cavils in Religion; it being justly to be feared, as our great Prelate (Arch-Bishop of *Cant* in his Epistle to his Majestie) sayes, that Atheism and irreligion gathers strength, while the truth is thus weakned by an unworthy way of contending for it; and I am perswaded that most men, while their thoughts are so busied in *chicanes* of controverted points, grow negligent of those more weighty ones that neerlier import salvation, and so runne out of the

most

most essentiall good of their souls, as impertinently as many a peevish freeholder that wasts a solid estate in endlese law suits for a trifle; and as I think these points little important for use, so I concur with you in esteeming both these, and all other matters of Religion very unfit to be argued on for ostentation or applause, which I am sure I am as farre from aiming at in this subject, as I shall be farr from attaining it. 'Tis true, the condition of the knowing and ignorant, is usually quite contrary to the Lords servants in the Gospel; there he that had least, wrapt up his single talent in a Napkin; but amongst men now a-dayes that pretend, whoever hath least, it is he longs most to shew how much he hath, and so publishes how little; yet, thus far they oftentimes both agree, that neither improve their store: and thus by my ignorance unless you be charitable, I confess my self liable to be suspected guilty of the vain appetite of ostentation that usually accompanies it; but as my ignorance exposes me to the suspition, so my consciousness of it (the sole knowledge that I can brag of) frees me from the ambition suspected, and layes upon me a necessity of concluding with a huge Apologie for presuming to give you so much trouble, and I fear, so little satisfaction: I confesse I ought to have been restrained from venturing at all upon this

Debate,

debate, the Subject it ſelf being ſo farre above the pitch of my literature; And the Perſon with whom I preſume to argue the difference of Opinion, confeſtly my Superiour in all advantages both of Nature and Acquiſition, beyond all hopes of compariſon; Conſiderations either of them able to deterr a much confidenter man then my ſelf: But Friendſhip, which alwayes findes, or makes men equall, hath long ſince licenc't me from the latter, and hardened me to impart my conceptions, how low ſo ever, as freely to you, as I could do to any inferiour Wit of mine own levell: And for the firſt, I have neglected it upon this perſwaſion, that I ſhall be better able to anſwer to the Divines, a young, a Lay, and ignorant mans adventuring to treat of their Buſineſs, then to you, and to my ſelf ſo womaniſh a wrong, as not ſubſcription to the Dictamens of your ſtrong and powerfull Soul, without yeelding my reaſons for the variance, which how light ſoever they may be found, when pondered by your excellent judgement, yet being really ſuch, as are moſt convincing to mine, they will ſerve to excuſe me to you, to juſtifie me to my ſelf, and I hope to make my Errours even pardonable with God, who when by Saint *Peter*, he bids us be *able to give a Reaſon of the hope that is in us*; I am confident he expects it no better then pro-

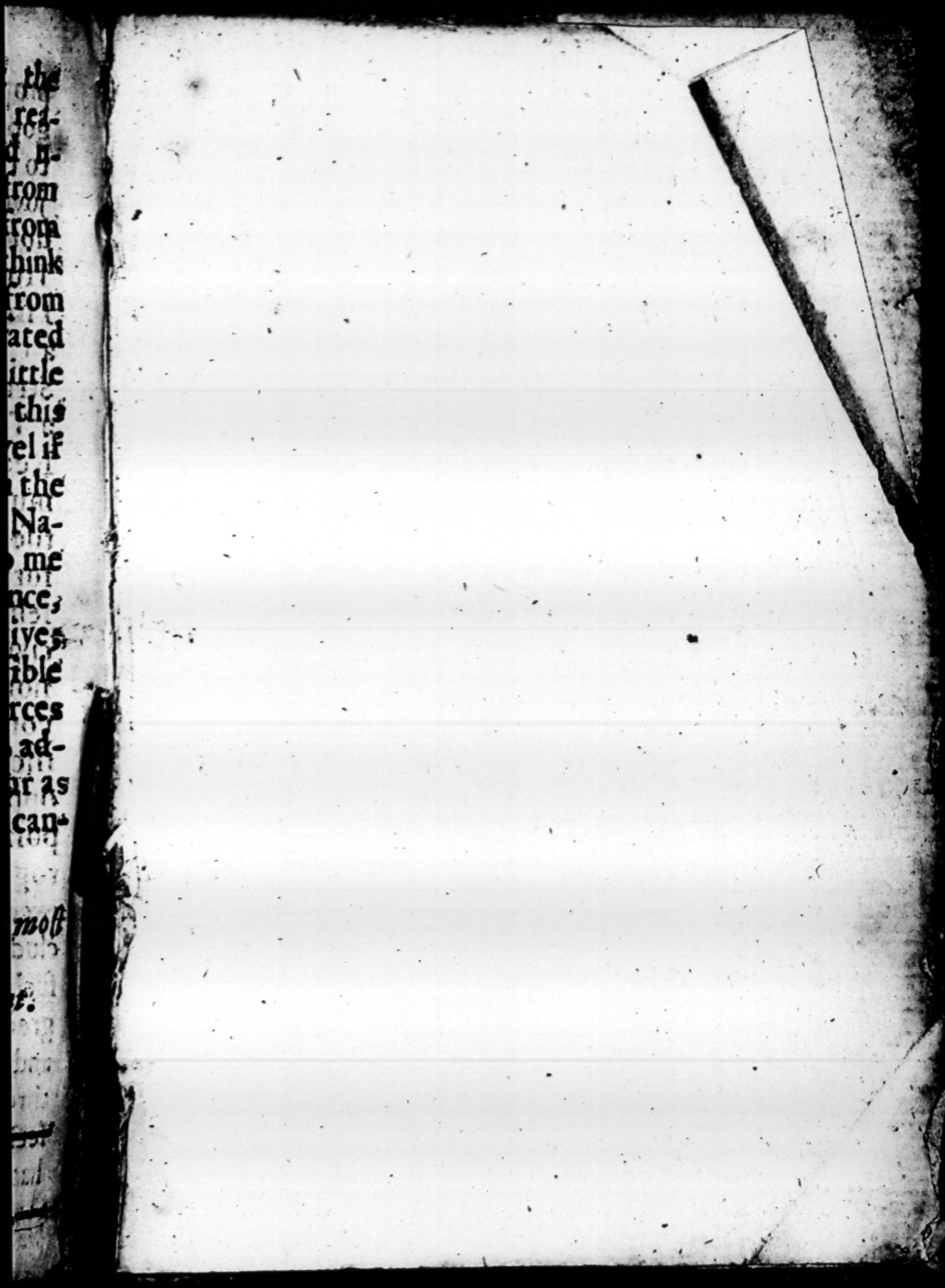
proportionable to the capacities that his goodneſs hath endowed us with: Anſwerable to them is this Diſcourſe, weak I confeſs, diſjoynted, and without nerves; and yet I doubt not but it may be ſo evictuated by Truth and the goodneſs of my Cauſe, that I ſhall not be aſhamed to have encountred a *GOLIAH* with a Sling. A Straw kept in a right Line, might batter a Tower; from which right Line of Truth and Reaſon, I may ſafely proteſt I have not ſo much as once voluntary ſwarved in this Treatiſe, through any partaking paſſion, or forelaid deſigne; neither have I ſuffered my ſelfe herein to be ſo farre wrought upon by civility, as to forbear a free and round expreſſion of my ſenſe, where ever it differed from yours: and truly, there was no cauſe why I ſhould; ſince in our diſputes, the ſtrongeſt oppoſition, that I or the beſt wit for me can poſſibly make to your opinions, will derogate no more from your unqueſtionable excellencie of judgement, then it would conclude either of us ill-ſighted, ſhould you affirm ſuch a Garment to be red, and I that it were green, the object being a changeable Taffaty, and we ſeated in contrary lights, or looking through mediums diverſly tincted; a like effect upon the ſoul, to theſe upon the ſenſe, hath diverſity of education, and diſcrepancy of

those principles wherewith men are at the first imbued, and whereon all out after reasonings are founded: Conformity and uniteness of minde, are rarely flowing from contrary Educations, as the same River from opposite springs; sweet, happie, and I think sole, is the self-sameness which arises from pure principles of nature, never sophisticated by the artifices of our breeding, but little derivation from those Fountaines hath this or that Sect of Religion; and so no marvel if we agree not therein to be one, as we do in the other most true and prime Emanation of Nature, Friendship; which, on your part to me I am confident must needs spring from thence, since my small merit affords no other motives, and for mine to you, I am sure it is impossible without an intire concurrence of all the forces of Sympathy, for any man to reverence, admire, and love another, with that Ardour as I do you dearest Cousin, and which you cannot but own in

SHERBURN,
March 29.
1639.

Your most faithfull and most

Affectionate Servant.

G. D.

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